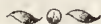


THE HOUSE OF SUCCESS

DARRELL FIGGIS

A. M. D. G.



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The House of Success

BY DARRELL FIGGIS

“The predictions of the seers are based on observation of the Universal Circuit. How can this indicate the evil with the good? Clearly the reason is that all contraries coalesce.”

—Plotinus

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THE GAEL CO-OPERATIVE PUBLISHING
SOCIETY, LTD.

—
1922

PR 6011.I35H 6 1922


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Fourth Edition

A DEDICATION

1. *I brought you a sheaf of early songs,
And sang them in your ear
(We were younger then by sixteen suns).
You listened to them, and whispered low
That you knew not what I would shew
Not knowing what I knew. For to know
Is to eat one fruit once.
But I still sang from my sheaf of songs;
And you heard me still, my dear.*
2. *I bring you now this later lay
For your lighting glance to greet
(We are older now by sixteen years).
You will not read it. Better so!
The things I have striven here to shew
Were known to you sad years ago
In the bravery of our fears.
We have plucked our fruit this many a day
Of bruised faith and defeat.*
3. *Well, what is silence, or what speech,
But a smile on the lips of growth
(Whether old or young, and both are one)?
What we have learned to know, we know.
It was our Destiny bid us go
Where the old, worn years together flow
And merge, pass and are done.
We have gathered our fill of fruit from each;
We have been taught and have learned of both.*

28 : xi. : 1921.



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REÁINRÁD

IN Connacht in 1915 I heard a tale substantially as I tell it in the first chapter of this story. The very name of the child's benefactor in that story was Blake; and it was revealed to me in my subsequent reflection that his other name must have been Marcus.

Knowing from experience the queer, permanent effect through life of isolated experiences in childhood, and especially of sentences heard among many but singled out by memory, it interested me to follow this child through life. Many solitary hours were beguiled for me by this interest. In a little while the child grew up, and became for me more real than my companions. I knew his voice; I could foretell his actions; and, while I differed with him often in our communions, I loved him. I believed I had something to tell him that would be to his advantage, but I knew also that he had much to say to mine. Then he married and begat children; and thus the remarkable thing occurred that caused me to write his story.

I was occupied from January to June of the year 1920 in the writing of the book, just as it now appears, during the intervals of other labour. Later that year, so I am informed, another book appeared in which part of the story told in my first chapter is woven more slightly into the narrative. Perhaps the final origin was the same, who can tell? So I have written these words to protest for myself that only worth in a man's life, his own integrity.

D. F.

Oidhche Shamhna, 1921.

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CHAPTER ONE

I.

THE manner of Jeremiah Hare's first coming to the field he held so well was itself wonderful. Often Father Laverty told the tale before he went his way, the good man.

It was one of those late visitations of summer, that make the sea about the Connemara coast like a sapphire held in the light of the sun, beautiful and ominous. The harvest was gathered. The hares were away to the mountains. The gardens by the sea lay once again in black lonely ridges, unclothed with gold or green; and, beyond the village, the mountains loomed up against a thunderous blue sky, purple and blue themselves, scarfed in a violet mist. There was not a cloud in the sky; there was not a ripple on the sea. The men of the village were all on the roofs of their cottages, busily thatching in parties together. Their voices, as they cast the rope to one another, came in a rhythm across the gardens, and made the silence seem more rapt. Only the sharp cry of a woman to some child sprang like a tongue of flame through the day to threaten its leisured peace.

On such a day Marcus Blake made his way down from his demesne on the hillside through the village. The difference between the people and him in the matter of the land he held and they wrought, did not affect their personal relations. These were grounded in deeper things, for he was apparently likeable and

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conversable enough as a man, a good shot, hardy for his years, handsome of appearance, and kindly of soul. So the men from the roofs turned to call him a blessing as he passed, and he waved his stick as he went his way, and prayed that their work might be staunch.

He came to the far end of the village and stayed at the house of old Martin O'Hara. Inscrutable the chance that took him to that cottage. He might as well have gone to any other cabin in the village. And how different would have been the result! He might have sought out that cottage. He might have happened on it as the one cottage in the little village with a clean wig of rye-thatch upon it. Yet whatever the chance, hazard or intention that stayed him there, as he stood on the height of the road looking down at the cabin that stood back a little from the bank, old Martin O'Hara came to the door.

"A blessing on your honour," he said, speaking slowly with a strong accent, coming to the foot of the bank.

"And very kindly to yourself, Martin," replied the other, moving down the bank. "This is great weather we're having."

"'Tis in soul. 'Tis apt for a change anymore."

"I believe it is indeed," said Marcus Blake, looking at the haze above the horizon, and between the mountains and sky. "But it's very remarkable weather for this time of the year."

"It is remarkable, and it is unreasonable."

Marcus Blake was a distinguished-looking man, and always looked well in his checked shooting suit; but his distinction seemed faded beside the forbidding dignity of Martin O'Hara. Martin was dressed as usual in his black cloth hat, bawneen, and trousers of strong, grey, twilled braiding. He leaned on a stout ashplant while he spoke, and it was rather this than his weather-scarred face and grey beard that spoke of passed strength. He did not look at Marcus

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Blake. Marcus Blake did not look at him. They each looked out across the bay; and Martin's grandson, Diarmuid, stood between them with his hand upon his grandfather's arm.

"I suppose," said Marcus Blake, "we must not complain of the weather when we get it good."

"God knows such things better than a human body indeed, but we'll be paying for this yet before we're out with the winter. I always seen it that ways myself. 'Tis little use a person to be complaining, if he had a right to be prepared itself. I do be heeding Martin at his braiding. 'Tis only the one weight of wool he has for his task, neither more nor less. He must measure it in the warping and the weaving, for what he'll lavish in the one will come again him in the other. Each does be paying and pairing the other, for 'tis only one wool in the beginning and 'tis only one braiding in the end. No doubt Himself above has the same difficulty with the good things and the bad, and we had a right to be leaving our blame from Him."

Marcus Blake looked shrewdly at Martin in the reflective silence that passed before he spoke.

"Is your son at home?" he asked.

"He is not, then. He's abroad thatching. We'd a right to be neighbourly, and if the day was bad wouldn't it be wasted on him?"

"You're staunch against the winter, anyway."

"Thanks be to God. It was mannerly of the neighbours, with the weight of sorrow is on me. I amn't in the handy way of working myself, and there's only Martin about the house now since the day Diarmuid was rested, God be good to him."

"I suppose so. What will you do with the lad now?" he asked, laying his hand on the boy's shoulder.

"I'll put Martin out for a comrade after the Christmas, and it'll make a home again for him."

"How would it be," said Marcus Blake, casually,

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"if I took him with me to Dublin? He could be coming to and fro with me for a while. I'd keep him by me in my house, where he could make himself useful; and then, as the time came, I'd put him out to business."

"God spare your honour the long life and the health," said Martin, with dignity and without haste. "Herself would be wishful to hear you speak of that. It's a poor house we have, with the little help; but you're very heartily welcome."

It was indeed a poor house, if the welcome were hearty. Old Martin's Anna sat on the stool beside the hearth, a mere broken skeleton of a woman; and the earthen floor of the cabin was unswept, such cleansing as it received being given by the chickens. At one end the floor was banked up with refuse, making a stable some two or three feet higher than the rest of the floor, and in a corner of this stable stood young Martin's hand loom and weaving gear. A little low window opposite the bed looked out over the gardens towards the bay.

Old Anna rose quickly as the two men entered, and pulled her shawl over her head before putting out her hand to bid her guest welcome. Young Diarmuid followed them within the house, and stood watching the visitor with an intent, determined frown that never for a moment flinched in its regard. Rarely impersonal was such observation as this; for when Marcus Blake looked over and nodded kindly towards him his scrutiny became even more intent and determined while the conversation flowed along its courtly passages between the elders.

If he were impersonal towards them, they were as impersonal with him. A bargain was forward, and old Martin was appraising him as he might any cattle on a fairday. True, no price was involved in this particular bargain, but the habits of a lifetime are not deterred by the lack of so trivial a cause.

"There's no more harm attached to him," said he

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from the bench beside the bed, "than there is in any of those chickens." He indicated the chickens with his ashplant while they picked their way unconcernedly before him. "It's how the way of life comes as natural to him as the creatures. The very same, it is. It was the way with his father before him, and his mother was kind in the rearing if she didn't live after him indeed. There's many that have devilment and wickedness in them, but it's not the way with that lad. We'd a right, maybe, not to take pride for the things we escape; but we had a right to be thankful for the things we receive: and it's how the lad is as natural as the creatures, and no harm whatever attached to him. A thing he has a mind for he does set himself to do, and I'd a mind to put him to the weaving. But if your honour has a wish to put him high in the world, no doubt it's the will of God for him. I wouldn't gainsay that, and no doubt it's good money he'll be putting back to us."

The old woman keened a little before she replied.

"We couldn't stand between him and his luck, so we couldn't," she said. "And we're very thankful to your honour."

"We are without doubt." Old Martin rose. "Sorra one of me knows but we'd be lost without your honour to help an odd time, for it's only destruction working them gardens."

"We must all be neighbours, Martin," said Marcus Blake. "It's agreed then that the lad comes with me to Dublin. I'll be going in about a week or so."

"Put your hand to the gentleman," old Martin shouted to the lad; and, still with the intent frown across his brows, Diarmuid slowly and thoughtfully put out his hand to confirm the bargain.

The world is always re-learning the truth of its commonplaces. It grows grey, not in experience, but

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in the conning of antique texts. Its back is rather bent like the bookman than its brow wise like the sage. Consequently one may be permitted to renew astonishment at the great results that grow from little causes, the crested romances, in fact as in fiction, that are reared on a slender anecdote.

For on the second evening after his coming to Dublin Marcus Blake called his young care to his study and sent him out to buy an evening paper. He lived in Harcourt Street, at that time a more suitable place of residence than perhaps it is now. Father Laverty had come to town with him. They were two great old friends, and they were seated together when the errand was committed to the lad.

"You won't lose your way, now?" said Marcus Blake.

"I will not," the lad replied. He stood there stolidly; with the same frowning intentness he received his penny.

"Are you sure, now?" asked his reverence.

The lad made never an answer, but turned on his heel and marched out of the room. The two men laughed, and Father Laverty rose and walked over to the window.

"It's a bad night to put him out," said Marcus Blake from his seat beside the fire.

"Ah, don't be talking. Haven't they the use of it? It'd take more than that, Marcus, to quell a Connemara lad, though it's a bad night enough, I'll allow. Ah, there he goes now. I wonder how will he shape at all in this city."

"He'll do well enough, the same Jerry."

For it was no more Diarmuid O'Hara that made his way through the rain that pattered on the pavement. Marcus Blake had decided that Diarmuid O'Hara was a good enough name for Connemara, and fitted well with its circumstances; but that it would not do for Dublin. What was good for the mountains was not good for the pavements, seemed

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to be his judgment, without any unnecessary criticism implied on either. His mind was set against the picturesque, and in that he did injustice to our capital city. With an eye to his business future almost prophetic in its perception, he had accordingly decided that Diarmuid O'Hara should disappear from the scene, and that Jeremiah Hare should take his place. Arbitrary transposition; though whether such arbitrary transpositions are always altogether complete, not to say final, is perhaps a much more debatable matter.

Diarmuid O'Hara, then, was no more. Having once been on the earth, he was now no more, neither on earth nor elsewhere. A new Jeremiah Hare, beginning life at twelve years of age, under the mysterious influences our names have on our destinies, had taken his place, and had gone forth to buy an evening paper.

It was not long before he returned, and handed Marcus Blake his paper. He was at the door on his way out, when a shout called him back.

"Ah, Jerry lad, you'll have to be smarter than that if you want to make your way in the world. Will you look at the date on that paper?"

Jerry looked at the date without displaying enthusiasm or understanding. Whatever his thoughts or emotions, he revealed nothing in his wary watchfulness.

"That's yesterday's paper, my boy. The Dublin gossers got the start on you there. They're the fellows for the Connemara folk, and you'll have to learn a lot before you'll be fit to skin their eye. Wait till you're the equal of them, and you'll do. Now you just go out and get another paper, and see that you don't get caught again."

He gave Jerry another penny. Jerry walked away slowly, collectedly, thoughtfully. He had been gone a minute or so when he returned and asked for the rejected paper.

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“That’s right; you take a good look at it,” his mentor said, handing it to him. But Jerry folded it, and put it carefully under his coat as he went his way.

3.

An hour passed. Nearly two hours passed without token or sign from Jerry. One of the maids had been sent to look for him, and had returned saying she could find no signs of him. The two men had hurriedly taken their dinner, and were passing to and fro from the window. The rain pattered on the pavement, and the light of the lamps gleamed in crossing lines along the road, dull and yellow in the haze. Looking into night in the hope that a lost body will appear magically is not the cheerfulness of tasks. Looking into such a night on any mission whatever would dull the brightest mind. And when that night is encompassed with bare Georgian houses that gloomily disappear into higher darkness, the case is about as bad as it could well be, for our Dublin architecture, whatever its austere beauty for other moods, was not devised for the particular occupation that brought these two first to anxiety, then to distress, and finally to pure irritation.

The cloth lay yet upon the table, with the dishes scattered on it, in silent witness of the household disorder. Perhaps the kettle still steaming on the hob, and the stout empty glasses beside the empty easy chairs, were testimony more eloquent yet.

Marcus Blake had damned Connemara boys, and his own extravagant impulses, often enough and sincerely enough to have put the whole Connemara population in peril, before a cry from Father Laverty called him to the window.

“Will you look at that boy now, Marcus. Ne’er a coat on him, and ne’er a hat, and ne’er a boot or stocking. Would you believe there’d be that weight of devilment in a quiet gosser? And well contented, too, faith, from the look of him.”

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“It's own nature to him to be that way, I suppose. Do you think did I speak too roughly to him? Perhaps I sent him off with the bit in his teeth. I tell you I'm glad to see the sight of him now. Do you know, you should have pulled me up if you thought I spoke too hastily.”

The truant came across the street at a quick decisive trot, and slipped down the area steps. There was none of the reluctance of a lost soul about him, nor the gladness of a lost soul found. Just the directness of an arrow to its mark, ordinary enough, for all the bootless, coatless gear.

They heard the noise of voices below raised in exclamation, but it was some time before Jerry appeared. Marcus Blake rang for the maid, and he had begun to ask her vexedly where the lad was, when he came round from behind her into the room. He was coated again, fully shod, trim and tidy; and he came as determinedly as ever, though with a determination softened in a hardly perceptible glow of triumph.

A paper was in his hand, and he gave it over.

“What happened you? Were you lost?” asked the other, not looking at the paper.

“Is it the right paper you have?” The note of triumph rang clearly in the voice, for all the restrained manner.

“It is; it is,” he said, looking hastily at it. “But what kept you this long time?”

For answer Jerry put his hand slowly into his trouser-pocket, and, drawing it out again, laid it open before them all. Five pennies lay in the palm, under the fingers arched ready to close on their spoil.

“Where did you get those?” Marcus Blake looked from the pennies to the eyes alight with triumph, and from the eyes to the pennies again.

“It wasn't the Dublin gossers got the start of me, well.”

“But where did you get them, Jerry?”

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“It’s how the Connemara folk is the equal of any. Selling papers I was. They’d a right to keep from me anyways.”

“Man dear, I believe he sold that stale issue again.” It was Father Lavery whose mind filled up the unspoken details of the triumph. “Did you sell that old paper, Diarmuid?”

“It wasn’t the only paper I sold, well.”

“But do you know that was dishonest?”

“Weren’t ye praising it?”

The interrogation rang sharp and clear, to the dividing asunder of principle and approval. The interrogation was in fact in person, for Jerry’s wariness slipped from him, and he became like a live question cut in the flesh. Father Lavery made a noble effort to recover his ground, and spoke his lesson with all appropriate dignity; but when Marcus Blake drew the lesson to a close by bidding the maid take Jerry to his meal, the undoubted conviction in all minds was that the honours lay where the pennies lay—in Jerry’s pocket.

CHAPTER TWO

I.

MARCUS BLAKE having, with his hearty, happy manner, marched Diarmuid O'Hara to Dublin, and having there transmogrified him into Jeremiah Hare, proceeded to march himself out of this world and to become himself transmogrified. He stayed long enough to ensure that there should be no relapse from Jeremiah Hare to Diarmuid O'Hara. For it is clear to the lightest glance that the two names imply two entirely different kinds of personality. Have it as one will, we grow about our names as weeds grow about a tree; or if the weed prove the stronger, it gives its character to the elm, and dignified Patrick becomes more pleasantly Paddy, or even more humorously Phaid. In the end, names and characters accord, and, even though we may dismiss our natural recognition as an idle fancy, it is a fact that none will expect from a body bearing the name of Diarmuid O'Hara the same inward characteristics associated with the name of Jeremiah Hare. Be the theory what it may, the fact remains. And the same Jeremiah Hare was in the habit of saying: "Facts for me; you can take your theory to the next person."

Within a week or so of his arrival in the city, Marcus Blake took Jeremiah to his office, and there he continued at the beck of every clerk for two years. Those two years were, as it were, the assurance of his change, and his vaulting stage into the dark. What his behaviour was on that stage is as little known as his adventures in the dark into which he vaulted. That he picked up some uncanny parts of law, which he put to as uncanny uses, is certain. He

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had, as we all know, a remarkable power of abstracting from every situation exactly what would prove of later use to him, and as decisive a habit of rejecting what would not prove so serviceable.

Between Harcourt Street, where he lodged in the servants' quarters, and Dame Street, where he lived his days, his weeks passed into months while he drank into his being whatever was to be drunk. Only once during that time did he return to Connemara, and that was during his second summer.

Early the following spring, Marcus Blake died while on a visit to his place in Connemara. He returned, in fact, to die, as Father Laverty affirmed, for he had been ailing all the winter. Being the only Blake of his line, his affairs fell into confusion, and while that confusion lasted none gave a thought to Jeremiah Hare.

2.

First the house in Harcourt Street was closed, and the lodger was without the home the free quarters of which had been reckoned as part of his wage. Then, it would seem, the practice in Dame Street passed into other hands, the office was closed, and the lesser members of the staff were without employment. By this time, however, old Martin, who had only distantly heard of these happenings, and to whom the regularities of life in Connemara were no doubt the fixed code of the world, had consulted his Parish Priest, with the result that Father Laverty had at once come down to Dublin. But by that time Jeremiah Hare was no more to be found. At what stage of the confusion he had disappeared, whether when his lodging was hauled up by the root leaving him to fly elsewhere for shelter, or whether when the rumour of coming disaster stirred in Dame Street like the first breath of a storm, it is impossible to say, and it has been impossible to discover. The only record is from Father Laverty himself, that he searched

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diligently, and that his search was in vain. Even as Diarmuid O'Hara had passed into Jeremiah Hare, Jeremiah Hare passed out of sight.

Nothing is more annoying, more dissatisfying, than to pass round and about a darkness that refuses to give up its secrets. When that darkness holds the key without which some notable enigma cannot be unlocked, the case is worse yet.

The darkness into which Jeremiah Hare vaulted is just such a case. It was a darkness which he himself guarded with skill. His natural mind was like a quiet lake in the mountains that never by so much as a ripple betrays the streams with which it is fed. Though the light play silverly along its surface, its depths are dark, and in that darkness is hidden the mystery of its being.

It is certain that he spent some four or five years in the city of Dublin, and that he had to prove that our kindly, gentle-mannered capital hides' severities more cruel than other less pleasant places. She is intimate where she is gracious; but she is not so kindly where she is galled with wounds.

"I had to fight my way from the bottom," he said once to his elder son; "and that you'll never do, though 'twould be as well for to remember that you won't." He was never ashamed of that fight, though he never bragged of it. He always spoke tenderly of it, almost furtively indeed, as a man might speak of a day he lost the use of the hand he thrusts out of sight.

Bottom it was surely: a bottom with dregs in it. Unless one altogether misreads the meaning of certain of his talk, news' posters were his blankets, and his bed the stairway of a den in the Coombe. And it is certain that no man will positively assert that the rawest cold will not so surely keep the nights wakeful as the body alive with vermin, without some effective memory to guide his comparison.

"Let priest or pastor say what they will," he said

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once, "but poverty is a sin. Whose sin, I won't say. But somebody's sin. And in all affairs of the soul, you have to think of your own soul first, and get out of sin the shortest road you can. Jacob, I believe got a blessing by letting on to be his brother. Bit of a sniveller, the same Jacob; but for a token that he was wise he got the blessing by all accounts. 'Twas the mother put him up to it, and wit's the mother of all wise men."

By what road he found his way out, and what manner of wit it was that searched the road, it is impossible to say. Perhaps the mind of the Connacht farmer came to his help—the Connacht farmer who, with the memory of famine living unconsciously in the blood he inherits, will, with no need whatever in a different economy of the land, endure incredible privations till, in stocking or in bank, the wealth of two years' treasure lies to his hand, and he can look fearlessly in the face of the future. Certainly he had always that protective care in the daring of his days. It was part of his inheritance.

It should have distinguished him from the city folk among whom he strayed, who do not know any day what the next day will bring, and whose only assurance is that it is folly to care too greatly. Otherwise it is impossible to account for the event that did distinguish him from them. During these years, many or few, there was nothing, unless it were a different accent, to mark him out from those to whom Dublin is not a protection, but a desperate daily adventure. Yet there was a difference, deeper than an accent of speech. There was a different accent of mind. They might all have seemed to be treading the one way, in the eternal drifting shuffle of a city to and fro, without beginning and without end. But it was not so. For his feet were on a road with an end to it, and that road was the road of his people, a road which despair has lit with grim purpose.

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3.

The difference between men is the difference of the ends they seek, and while the others continued to drift to and fro, Jeremiah Hare is found in America. Of America there is no doubt. There could be no doubt of it for any that knew him, for he spoke of it by clear reference. Moreover, that reference can be checked by a fairly reliable measure—not infallible, yet reliable, as those who know the West of Ireland will agree. For the reference covered the Bowery of New York, sinister and painful, and Chicago in the Middle West, sunlit and capacious and adventurous. Now in nothing can his hereditary path be seen more clearly than in this. Did not a generation, and two generations, go before him on the very track? Did not many other O'Haras (though as O'Haras; not disguised as Hares) and O'Flahertys and Blakes and Costelloes from his own townland and surrounding townlands wait doggedly, grimly, vengefully in the Bowery before setting out to make their habitation in Chicago? Was not his townland reproduced in a street of that great city, household by household and neighbour by neighbour; and was not a journey from his townland to Chicago like visiting of an evening, and no great journey at all?

To be sure, the homing instinct was weak in him; for it was Jeremiah Hare who went, not Diarmuid O'Hara. Consequently his sojourn in the Bowery was lengthier than it should have been, and being lengthier therefore bitterer. Yet the track had been beaten, not only on American soil, but in his own mind; and, like a bird that crosses mountain and wave along a track unmarked on the winds, he followed the path faithfully till he came at length to its end—the end that was to be his beginning.

Therefore it is reasonably sure that it was in Chicago he served as bar-tender, being then, as I reckon, in his early twenties. However long he

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remained so, he saved money, and took the occasion of what is called education. It is right to guard the word, for it was the guard himself used.

"Man dear, all the learning ever I got I took for myself while the boys below handed out the drink. Never more than that. But my chief learning was to mark the different way different sorts of men came through the swinging doors and across the floor, and to guess the kind of drink they'd order. A person could have it ready for them before they'd have the word spoken. I'll allow a degree of learning is necessary, but you have to distinguish the sorts. For a man like yourself who takes a pleasure in reading, you have to learn the way of it, as you'd have to learn cards if that was your pleasure. I'm not talking about that; and I'm not talking about those who have to study to put men like me in the way of making money. That's one sort, no doubt. But for a man like me all that's wanting is enough to handle rightly the next task in hand, and anybody can get that as he goes along if he but learns the meaning of the signs folk use. And it's men like me who rule the world, William.

"Ay, and there's another sort, too, I'll allow. There are the makeweights of talk. Any old jarvey will tell you folk do be foolish. It's not the length of the road gets the fare, but the comether on the tongue, nine times out of ten. Each kind of fare has its own kind of talk. A bit of coloured water cured many an ache if it had the right talk with it, and many a right medicine failed without it. And on the higher roads of life, that kind of talk's not to be had without reading, whoever does the reading. Still you can gather it as you pass along if you're wary.

"It's all a case of knowing the signs and tokens, and I had little enough of them till I put in a year between waking and sleeping and watching men drink. It was all the harder for me, for I'd rather be watching men. So you mustn't expect me to know

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too much of what men did in times that are past and gone. I only learnt the signs to take the road with them; and when I had the signs I took the road."

He spoke more freely of those hours, for they were nearer the light towards which he came. It was as traveller of a worthless patent drug he came to Ireland again. He came from England where he had already been employed in selling that drug. It was near the last days of its run when he came, and there is no doubt that he foresaw that end. He admitted casually that he saw he had to discover a new road, and that he preferred, if it were possible, that Ireland should find it for him.

The truth was, I imagine, that he was hungry to see Dublin, where the hills stand about the city, visible through any vista of the streets, cool and quiet beyond its unrest. His casual reference did not, to me, disguise the hunger that had drawn him. Who can tell, perhaps the influence that drew him was the same as that which makes men bite an aching tooth? It is a mystery, but our pain on earth does the more endow its scenes with longing. . . .

CHAPTER THREE

I.

OUT of all this, as out of great darkness and the ravelled turmoil of a dream, Jeremiah Hare stepped into our little circle of light. How well one remembered his coming, the hour and the manner of it. Even then it seemed something out of the ordinary.

Unless one's memory like a barque voyaging through Time's seas has become freighted with cargoes shipped at later ports, there was at that first coming a kind of wonder about him, and even less a wonder than a portent, as if one had in a flash seen God's acting version of the play of life and noted in the margin that this entrance was to be specially marked. Rarely one meets people like that. The most of men and women greet, meet, eye and pass one another, and there is no more about it. Yet once or twice in a life, golden hours of a golden life, men suddenly appear before us, literally appear before us, like eagles that have stooped from an inner world of their own, or so it would seem to us. And how vain to try and render appearances such as these, that belong not to circumstance, but to the mind.

It was in the early winter of '85, and our minds were all turned to our great Chief, on whom we had all just so recently left our hands, empowering him as the fighter in the ford to do battle in our name. I was very comfortably lodged at that time in a boarding-home in Drumcondra. My little clerkly income did not permit of more than a small room in the height of the house; and there I spent my evenings quietly enough, never going abroad unless

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occasionally to meetings of the Gaelic Union, which were very entertaining indeed. It often happened, however, that I would go downstairs with pipe and pouch to spend an evening with Father Lavery, who lodged in the room beneath me, and whose extreme weakness and age had compelled his retirement from the cure of souls.

The election had thrown us together. As one of the older clergy he had been strongly opposed to the Chief. He regarded him with suspicion. He did not trust him. That haughty presence, that aloof personality, had aroused in him an unexpected energy of opposition. For the Chief did not fit into his accustomed economy of things. As one of the army of youth, I had taken it upon me to convert him; and, as his was a lonely life, he had invited me to continue coming down to him when the election and its excitements had passed.

So we were sitting arguing together one night when the maid opened the door to say that a visitor wished to see Father Lavery. It was, I remember, a Wednesday late in October, and the voices of the children had just died away from the street outside. Memory brings that back upon me with strange distinctness, though I would not have thought I could have recalled so trivial a thing. Also I recall the scene: old Father Lavery sitting beside the fire in a large leather-covered chair, with his breviary beside him on a little table, a long pipe between his fingers, and a small case behind him with a few devotional books scattered on its shelves, all lit by a lamp that stood on the table beside me. I remember, too, the snuff stains that soiled the front of his coat.

We had been discussing the Chief as usual, and Father Lavery had been giving out bitterly that it was an evil day for Ireland when she entrusted her destinies to one who knew nothing of and had no regard for her true soul, when the visitor was announced. I rose to go. With a gesture, Father

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Laverty stayed me. Momentous gesture: full of meaning for my life.

The visitor was named as Jeremiah Hare, but that name brought back no sort of memory to the priest, who turned, waiting to hear the business that required him. For my part, I gave no attention to either of them at this stage. The conversation had not yet brought me within the picture. Indeed there was no picture into which I could have been brought. The picture still waited. It was a visitor who had come, not Jeremiah Hare who had emerged from that visitor.

"You don't remember me, Father. Indeed it's little wonder for you."

"Well, indeed now, I do not."

"And how well I remember you, we that don't know one another. Many's the time I heard you giving out the true doctrine, when I didn't mind true doctrine from bad while the hills were to run upon. And for all that, it wasn't the hills that made me know I was at home so much as the sight of the parish priest. I heard that the age got the better of you, but to be honest with you, you're just the same as ever, and the eye as bright if the hair is whiter. There are some people that improve with the more age. I suppose that's a token of goodness."

Father Laverty changed from an indifferent man to one charged full of interest. He looked across at his visitor with parted lips and a happy smile. He laid by his pipe, and offered his snuff-box across the fireplace. Already some of his years had fallen from him.

Jeremiah Hare took the snuff and sniffed it appreciatively and vigorously. "It isn't the first, and it won't be the last, please goodness," he said.

I was sitting beside him, and it did not seem to me that he took any of the snuff at all. I was therefore surprised at the sounds of apparent enjoyment, and to hear him say: "That's good snuff. The old

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people always said you knew a good snuff, and made plenty with it too. It makes a great difference to a parish to have a priest that's loved."

"Did you say your name was Hare?"

"Jeremiah Hare. Once of the parish of Bunowen, and now a wayfarer in the world. Wayfaring didn't put you out of my mind, though, as I'm here to prove. The last I saw of you was in the house of Marcus Blake, solicitor, in Harcourt Street. That was fifteen or sixteen years ago. Tricks Time plays on us, putting all those years on the top of me and none on the top of you."

Father Laverty was looking at him with a cross, puzzled look in his eyes. There was a waking memory in them, mixed with unbelief.

"Little Diarmuid," he said. "You're not little Diarmuid that was lost on us?"

"Little Diarmuid got himself lost, right enough, I believe. But it's Jeremiah Hare that's found."

Father Laverty was like a man overcome, but his visitor was perfectly in command of himself. A smile lit his features, but it was the smile of a watchful and wary man—a man in control of himself, keenly observing.

"To be sure," Father Laverty said to himself, "Marcus did say he'd make a man of affairs of you with a new name. That's right, I mind now surely." He rose to his feet, very feebly for all the assurance that he had not changed, and put out his hand to his visitor. "And you're little Diarmuid that's back from the big lost world. You're very welcome; you're very welcome, so you are. Very, very welcome."

Jeremiah Hare stood over him tall and broad as they shook hands. I stood up too, respectful witness of the touching celebration.

"Well, now, I said I wouldn't suit myself with a drop of punch against the Christmas. But, do you know, this alters the case altogether. William, my

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lad, will you run out for a proper kind of welcome?" He turned to me, and bethought himself of the courtesies. "This is William—Mr. William Costello. Now, William; and you must join us, too. Well, well; it's one thing to see the gossers growing up; but not to see them growing up is another case altogether."

2.

Even as we sat together, and Father Lavery waited on the kettle he had pressed down on the coals, I had still not been drawn within the picture. True indeed, I sat between the other two; but I kept aloof, not feeling myself the concern of the invisible artist whose brush worked in the stuff of common memories. Then I was suddenly awakened to interest.

Stealthily I looked over towards our visitor, without too greatly heeding him. My mind wandered from him, and turned naturally to the Chief as I had seen him presiding at councils of workers that were the prelude to that fine campaign. Jeremiah Hare fell out of my thought. If I were not in the one picture with him, there were without doubt other pictures in which I had figured, even if not greatly figured. Then I sat straight in my chair and looked hard at him.

He was smoking a cigar; and he smoked his cigar exactly as the Chief did. There was the same sense of a cool, quiet pleasure by which he held himself at a distance from the immediate scene in order the better to survey it completely. There was the same controlled ease; the same suggestion of strength better held in leash by a perfect and immediate enjoyment; the same apparent absorption in the lengthening ash with a mind all mobilised for action; even the same curious hardness, unflinchableness and calculation.

All this was displayed, as the Chief sometimes best displayed it, by the way he smoked his cigar, and

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held it sideways before his eyes to watch the fire curl and curve down the leaf. He, then, it was who had caused my thoughts to wander to the Man I held in my constant devotion. Instantly my interest in him occupied all my mind.

No doubt it was a matter only of the mind. As I began now for the first time to inspect him, the likeness disappeared in a complete physical dissimilarity. The one strand I had seen fell back into its place and disappeared when I turned to examine the cloth as a whole. But always I was aware of it. I knew this man was unlike all other men to me. The very unlikeness became the more to be cherished because of the other face that had suddenly looked on me, taunting me.

Whereas the other was in all his ways an aristocrat, this was a man of the people. Yet that is a foolish thing to say, and only falsely true. There are no people more naturally aristocratic than our Western folk; and their dignity marked the man who sat in the chair before me. He looked over forty, though he was only in his thirty-first year. He was broad of chest, tall even for our people, and his bright complexion and strong black hair made his eyes to seem of deeper blue. Those were measuring eyes; eyes that looked steadily and carefully: bold withal. They turned on me as I inspected him, and my own dropped before them. A fearless inspection looked from them, without vulgar curiosity. It was just that clear-sighted lack of fear that made me afraid to meet them. In just that instant I felt like a naked man. Nothing furtive there; no necessity for slanting measurement. Clear and direct and possessing. And his pressed lips, a little grim of the humour they held, gave to the whole a touch of wilfulness.

I had hoped to inspect him; but instead I knew myself inspected completely. Little more than superficial I saw; enough to know of a great deal withheld, and maybe deliberately withheld. But

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I knew the last page turned on the little my book held for him.

Having looked at me he withdrew into himself. In truth, it really seemed that he withdrew into his cigar, his enjoyment of it. The smoke curled up before his face, and he held it carefully to preserve the enormous ash that grew on it. Again that likeness assailed me, like a quick pain in the mind.

Then Father Laverty, whose attention had fussed over the kettle, began to mix the punch, and the conversation, that had endured in spasms and starts, flowed into a continuous whole.

3.

"But where were you all this time?" the priest asked.

"Wandering; wandering. It's a grand way to search for things."

"Where did you go?"

"Here and there over the wide world, as the song says."

"Poor old Martin was greatly fretted over you, the decent man. Greatly fretted he was. Up with me all the time asking for news of you; and then he went back minding his bit of cattle and land again."

"That's right." Jeremiah Hare spoke like a man wrapt defensively in his own thoughts. "It's never of any use to be fretting, for there's always something to be mended." He lifted his eyes and looked steadily across at Father Laverty. "I can see him smoking and saying, a person had a right to be heeding himself when he's of an understandable age, and no doubt we'd be hearing if there was harm come to him. The old men have great wisdom, and they didn't get it with reading, but with living. That's the right way."

"When Marcus died, and we heard the business was changing over, I came down looking for you, do you know? But you were gone."

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Jeremiah Hare, whom I now observed constantly, looked at the glowing edge of his cigar silently. He had another characteristic of our Western folk, that though when he held the initiative in conversation his manner was compelling and persuasive, when others held that initiative his dignity was almost repellent and hostile. He seemed unconcerned and detached; but I, who now held a precious clue in my hand, could see that he was alert, even apprehensively alert. It puzzled me greatly to think why. It was so very strange. One would think that Father Laverty was searching out a crime.

"Came to Dublin?" he said casually, raising his voice just sufficiently on the last word to give the whole the form of an enquiry.

"To Dublin. Your comrades at the office knew nothing of you, well. The police? Well, now, a long streel of a fellow with whiskers like a seal wrote letters the size of my foot in a book till you'd think 'twas the steer of a currach was stuck in his fist, and the starts of sweat bursting from the hairs of his head. But that was all that was in it. I did better looking for you through the streets myself; but it was a poor business. Where were you at all?"

The other looked at him affectionately, and laughed.

"Had we met then we wouldn't be meeting now, Father. Everything comes right in the end, provided you set out to put it right, of course. Sure. To do whatever's necessary . . . whatever's necessary. There's a key to every riddle. Only some people would rather not use it and like better to respect those who do."

"But where did you go to at all? You were like the game boys at the Galway races, with the card that's there and the card that's gone."

"Skinning my eye—that's what I was doing. It took some skinning, for it's old and tough, that same skin. They say the eagle hasn't even a lid to his eye, and can look straight in the sun. He flies high

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by the same token. I thought it all out, and I didn't read it in books. If I'd had the money for books, look what I'd have missed. There are harder things to look in the face of than the old sun. It wants only practice to look where there's light, and . . . well, perhaps it wants only practice to look where there's the other thing, too. But it's harder a long way. Then there's nothing to make a person afraid after. Would you believe I wouldn't have a week of it different? Not even a day. Sure."

There was something so challenging and upstanding in this speech that it put Father Lavery's conversation quite out of gear. While he filled up his pipe I timidly ventured a question.

"Are you quite sure of that?" I asked.

"Sure?" He turned on me like a fighter. Not provocatively, but coldly; and my glance went away from his. "Of course I am. Didn't I find it out of men and women? Not but that the most of them are afraid of what they know."

I clung still to my point. "Perhaps they're not the best judges," I suggested.

He looked at me with a clean hard eye. No doubt he had all this time had his eyes fixed on me. Then a mysterious softness glowed in them, like a movement under a still lake. Had I been given to fancy I would have heard laughter in the distance.

"I'll find it in you, too," he said.

A strange, masterful and kindly man.

4.

Not often he came up after this. Often enough and seldom enough to make me wish to see much more of him. I found his presence exciting—invigorating even; but I could see that he tired poor Father Lavery. Consequently his visits did not last long. For it was Father Lavery he came to see; and a drowsy host is the cutter-off of all amenities.

I was sometimes curious to know why he came.

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There seemed hardly any purpose if it were not the refreshment of memory. Yet whenever our host began to enquire of old times the conversation somehow slipped away into a discussion of men and women that quite put out of his depth the pastor of souls. One would almost believe Jeremiah Hare avoided the subject; but there was no trace of avoidance in his manner; certainly there was no vexation. He simply took up the conversation, and compelled it into his own channels. And the mention of old times started him away on the result of his experiences, though that knocked the heart out of Father Lavery's interest.

Yet I had the fancy that Jeremiah Hare liked the starting of this subject. I am sure that he had searched out his old parish priest because of that association, in spite of an incident that threw a suspicion—perhaps an unworthy suspicion—once into my mind. His affectionate, protective attitude towards the old man was very touching, and was as if he wished to repay an ancient debt. Yet the incident to which one has referred possibly explained a part of the complexity of all human action. It may have given rise to the rest.

On his second visit he asked Father Lavery casually if he were any relative to another priest of the same name who was secretary to a high dignitary of the Church; and I learned to my surprise that the two were uncle and nephew to one another. As he went off that night Jeremiah Hare took with him a letter of introduction from the uncle to the nephew.

I did not heed the matter at the time, but within a fortnight I saw an advertisement in the Press in which this same dignitary was quoted as having given a remarkable testimonial to a certain debility cure. I said nothing about it, for it was no business of mine. I was grieved, nevertheless, and a little startled. The matter made a noise at the time, and Father Lavery protested very strongly to his friend.

Hare seemed the least perturbed of all. He held

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his ground firmly. He was even indignant. He seemed to have grown even bigger; to have grown larger and loftier. There was a touch of humour about his mouth, but his eyes were scornful under the dark mass of his hair.

"Do you really mean to have me believe that he has not, nor ought he to have, any heed for the bodies of men and women? Aren't all the sins of the soul committed in the body? Isn't it in the body, and with the body, and through the body, we have to decide what our immortal destinies are to be? Is there any way but by the body we make those great and eternal resolves that decide what we are to be for ever? Isn't damnation and salvation a thing of the nerves and the blood; and if we have bad nerves and poor blood, what sort of chance have we at all? Sure, I don't know what you mean at all, Father, to tell you my honest mind. It seems to me clear enough that half the sins of the world are the result of bad health . . . and more than half maybe. Blood and nerves, that's what's damning us; and don't you know it well. And whose fault is it? Would you tell me that a man who wouldn't give a care to his body isn't committing just the very sins the bad body'll make for him? If we'd all clean blood and steady nerves the devil'd have a thin job in the next world."

"It's not that I'm talking of at all," Father Laverty said, holding angrily to his argument. "It's to come here and get an introduction from me and then to use it in that way. It's to go and hear words, and to use them to sell any patent medicine whatever, good, bad or indifferent."

Jeremiah Hare looked at him with keen searching eyes, not in any way thrown back. "And isn't that the same thing another way over? Is it in dark corners we're to give good counsel, then? Do you tell me that if a man has good counsel he shouldn't speak it where there are most men to hear? Or do

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you say what a person speaks in one place he doesn't mean in another? It seems to me you aren't too polite to him."

"But in an advertisement!"

"Well, what about an advertisement? What's amiss with it? Isn't it just a public meeting where folk have time to think before rushing on to the next thing? Sure. You'd make out that a good thing would become bad with being put in an advertisement—and likely a bad thing will become good by being kept out of an advertisement. Seeing that an advertisement's only a way of talking louder, goodness and badness is only a pitch of the voice."

"Jeremiah, but it's for your personal profit and advancement, that's what I mean."

"I suppose it isn't for his own personal profit and advancement he himself is where he is now, instead of remaining a curate all his life. Can't he see more from the top of the hill than from the foot o' it?"

All this seemed to me extravagant, so I tried to bring it back to a practical level.

"After all, it's only legitimate business," I said.

He turned on me with eyes full of light and interest.

"Ay," he cried; "that's what it is, legitimate business."

He had at that time a slightly annoying manner of appearing to laugh at one, though I noticed he sought out my company more constantly after this saying of mine.

5.

Yet it is sure he sought out Father Laverty for the sake of old friendship, and even out of the memories of gratitude. Whatever made him seek my company, even to the extent of calling me down from my room, that clearly was the motive stirring in him where Father Laverty was concerned. Though he never spoke of past times—or perhaps, though his mind never gave up any of its memories—it was curious to observe the way in which, perhaps quite uncon-

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sciously, he ever brought the conversation about Father Laverty's recollections. It was just curious; for whatever was the hunger that moved him, it never shewed itself after this period. The subject near which he so cunningly hovered in these conversations, he ever afterwards avoided by a wide circuit.

Perhaps his later silence was because the outward motive was lost. For in the severity of the following winter Father Laverty died. Nothing could have been kinder than Jeremiah Hare's attention during his illness. It was, as I know, mainly at his charge the funeral expenses were borne.

When we returned from the funeral, and were sitting quietly together, he told me that he had arranged to take on the dead man's rooms. And that meant, of course, that we were thrown together more than ever before.

CHAPTER FOUR

I.

OUR lives move, as our bodies grow, in periods of rapid development that alternate with periods that bind together and more or less release the gain that has been made. True, development continues all the time, but its nature changes. Anyone who has kept a diary, and who reads it in after years, will notice the distinction. The progress of mind in comment continues all the time fairly evenly, but the greater events and the lesser events are not properly inter-valled. They fall together in groups. No doubt, a law of life.

This was a period of very rapid development. For in the same year Jeremiah Hare was married, and in the same year I became his confidential clerk.

The two events were closely linked together. It is clear that he was seeking a match; and for him to seek anything was for him to get it, or there were surely weighty reasons to explain the failure. He always kept urbane (unless there were considered reasons for other behaviour), but there was never any misdirection when he had once come to a decision. That in itself, to anyone living intimately with him, was enough to strew the road with hints as to the ends of his wayfaring. And by such inexplicable, though not uncertain, hints he conveyed the impression—well, not exactly that he was looking for marriage, though that, of course, was implied in his intention—but rather that he was looking for a match.

When Jeremiah Hare once planted his feet in any circle it required a regular commination service to

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cast him forth again. Often he said to me: "Get in, man; first get in, and trust to your wits after. Aren't a man's wits fit for any occasion, or what were they given him for? The bigger the need, the more the wits will answer; and if they look like falling, think of the adventure." By what kind of conjury he managed the circles he had outraged in the matter of the advertisement it is impossible to say; but no doubt he left them under a sense of indebtedness to him. For he went there on several occasions to dine; and from there he won the entry to other houses.

That was not surprising. His quiet self-possession had all the dignity, and more than all the determination, of his own people in the West; and was of infinitely more worth than an acquired culture. Of this manner he never disrobed himself. He could not, for it was too truly a part of himself. In quiet friendship, when it fell ungirt about him, it was possible to see how truly it was a part of him. But when he gathered it firmly about him for the warfare that was his daily life, it became hard to deny any purpose toward which he travelled.

Anyone already resigned to this fell into the habit of simply expecting the conclusion. So I waited to hear the announcement of his marriage, sorrowful to think that our companionship was to be sundered so soon after it had been knit. It was late in the summer before I had my first warning.

I was coming out from last Mass, and missed my friend. Looking for him outside, I saw him standing, as I thought, alone. I had spoken to him, indeed, before I became half-aware that he was part of a group. Then I found myself being introduced to a lady beside him.

"Miss Delaney, let me introduce you to Mr. Costello, my confidential clerk."

Beyond the fact that she was dressed with taste and cost, and that she spoke musically and softly, I did not notice her further, for it was annoying to

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be spoken of falsely. I believe I was also introduced to another man who stood beside her, her father, who in spite of his important manner seemed rather to belong to, than to own, the handsome equipage near him. It may be that one spoke with them; but it was not long before I hurried away. And as I went, I determined to speak sharply with my friend directly I had him to myself.

It was not so easily done. We dined together; and during the meal he was dignified and aloof. In that mood, whether deliberately assumed or not, it was not easy to break his guard. He made one feel nervous of him. As a result, we were distant and cold with one another. It was the same for a long time, before I called on my courage.

“Do you think it necessary to bluff?” It was not what I had intended to say, but possibly a nourished indignation had struck down to the roots of things.

“Bluff? What bluff? You mustn’t think I bluff, William: I only prophesy.”

He was still aloof, and for an instant his eye was cold and clear before it softened to rare kindliness. But I was angry, and I had now found tongue.

“I am not talking about words,” I said. “I know very well what bluff is, and I don’t at all value being an agent in it, whatever your purpose.”

“And I don’t know much about words either, except that they’re mainly playthings for idle people. But I do know the difference in real things. That is, I know the difference between different kinds of people, which is all that it means; for there aren’t things, there are only people. And I tell you, I don’t bluff.”

“What do you call that play-acting to-day, then?”

“Well, you can call it play-acting if you like. I don’t mind that at all. There are different sorts of plays, too, and they come to different sorts of ends. I think you know that, too. There are some sorts of plays that mean nothing, and there are some sorts

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that mean a good deal. Just as there are some people who bluff, and some people who just prophesy. I don't bluff."

He reached forward as he said this. Then I saw a thing that had puzzled me before, like an unlocated thought. He seemed bigger. One could have vowed he was bigger. It was just as if he had filled out a new girth, and towered up. That is, of course, folly; but if we only live in one another's conceptions, he undoubtedly called some power to himself of changing the impression he created in the actual record of the eyes. I had always been vaguely aware of it—I should, for instance, have given his height in different measurements at different moments—but now I suddenly saw the transformation occur. His hands fell clenched to his lap; his body did not stir, but something from him came out toward me. Incidentally he looked amazingly beautiful, like a lost memory of an older order of being.

I was a little afraid of him, but I, too, was aroused. I compelled myself to look him in the eyes, if only for a beginning.

"Any person can make just that distinction."

"That creature Any-person doesn't weigh—at least he doesn't weigh separately, and that's the same as not weighing at all. He's just the world's tare. I'm talking about something else altogether. The man that bluffs is talking of something that isn't true, and never will be, to-day or to-morrow. There's the other man who's pulling old Time up faster to the thing that is true to-morrow. You don't understand that maybe. You're too much of a book-worm, William. You want to be thrown about a bit."

"I've heard some men talk; but I've also seen men play poker . . ."

"Poof. Poker. Have sense, man. Didn't I hear a lecturer 'way West once say Napoleon cheated at games! Sure. There wasn't any help for him. As if it wasn't ourselves that gave things their values;

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and the most men disremember the values they do give. On my soul they do. And that gives the others their chance. I've seen that much with the two eyes in my head, and the bit of sense I've learned."

We were getting far from the point. It was time to bring matters back to the question I had to get clear with him.

"So I'm to be your confidential clerk. Is that it?"

"You want to get on in the world, I suppose."

"Well, there isn't one of us but wants that."

"So I've noticed myself. Let it lie at that for a token. What did you think of Miss Delaney?"

"I didn't take stock of her. Was that her father with her? They looked as if they belonged to that outfit of theirs."

"Maybe they do." He relapsed into himself, and changed again as it were before my eyes. "But you wouldn't think that if they took you driving in the same outfit. You'd think you belonged to them then. And you would, too. He's Delaney's Stores."

"Is that so?" I said.

He looked at me with that queerly annoying laughter in his eyes . . . no, not in his eyes; rather, behind his eyes.

"That is so," he said, dryly. "He's them; and that's enough for Brother Bob-and-Scrape—your Any-person. It's good enough as it goes. It would be better if they were him. But he's past that. He's just holding up a painted image in his hands. 'Tis time to change all that."

2.

Sure enough, within a month he returned to the subject. I had come to await it. He had almost enveloped me with the expectation; and I was ready for him. He simply came up to my room, and asked me if I had thought any further on the subject. What a question to ask! He never gave anyone time to think—not even if he never made open reference to a

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subject. He poured his will in through all one's senses. There is no other way to express what occurred.

Yet he was quietly practical. He pointed out that he required someone to lift the routine of management off his shoulders. That, he said, was my qualification; and for the rest, did not all men prefer faces they knew to faces behind a veil? To be sure, they did.

He sat in my old wicker chair, while I looked out where the after-glow of sunset gilded the roofs at the end of a day of rain. He was hidden from me by the dormer-window; but his personality was all about me. It pervaded the room, though he were out of sight, as the sun beneath the rim of the world pervaded all the saddened autumn scene, touching it with gold. They both gave the thrill of mystery to the ordinary gear of the world.

Besides, he added, he now required somebody who would hold the reins while he passed from one coach to another. It was a position of trust and responsibility. One that required a personal knowledge of himself. It would develop with time—if he had his way.

He spoke like a dreamer whose dreams turn to his liking. I asked him, what about his office. I heard the wicker-chair creak as he turned in it. His present office would do, he said. Offices were nothing. It was what went out of offices that mattered. Later on matters would be more completely ordered. We had always to be ahead of our arrangements.

Anyway, something had to be done. He had made a good thing of his agency, and it would be some time before it would be played to its proper end. But he was about to be married. . . .

I turned about then, and stepped into the room to see him.

"To Miss Delaney, is it?" I asked.

"Just so. If you say I went for her, that would be

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true. But she went for me, too; and that's better. I can't believe we'd have had the same victory with old Delaney else. She's his only child, do you see; and I'm to learn the handling of the reins. That's what it means, though that's not the way he dressed it. It's no use fighting about words if you've a right hold of the true article. So now I've two teams to run."

Astonishing man. He sat thrown back in my wicker-chair—poised on it, rather, like Manannan on a sea-shell. It was wonderful how he induced that old wicker-chair to hold him, without over-balancing in the first alternative, or collapsing in the second. The feat was a constant miracle before one's eyes. It was a miracle that did not instantly appear, however; for he was the picture of repose; even of carelessness and utter lassitude. He smoked his cigar; and to one watching that operation it was plain to see that it only required one step—less than one step—for him instantly to stand within his observant, watchful self, like a hawk intent to strike. Yet there he was, stretched at length and balanced on that frail and perilous underpinning of wickerwork, luxurious and lazy where there seemed occasion neither for one or the other, casually discussing his marriage with a lady by whom he entered quite one of the nicest business properties in the city.

"Is she then an only child?" I asked.

He rolled his eyes toward me. "Sure," he said.

His mood invited discussion. Not a usual mood with him certainly. So I ventured a question.

"Delaney looked to me like a man who would not . . . well, prove very tractable."

He looked toward me again. "And you only saw him for two minutes. I knew I was right in you." He was silent then for a few minutes. "She's a very fine woman, William. Don't you make any mistake about that. Quiet, but very cool, and very determined. Families are not so easily managed as

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business affairs, do you know. That's why, I suppose, he wanted to keep both sides of the contract apart. Well, I kept them apart, too. If every plan has its own inconvenience, it has its own advantage, too. If your boat won't stir off the shore with pulling it before, it will with pushing it behind. The method is nothing. Getting it off is all that matters."

I said nothing, but let my silence imply a question.

"I'm to put money into the stores. A lot of money. A thousand down; and another three when I can get my American investments clear. Those American investments will prove a rare lot of trouble, it's easy to see. I tell you that, because as my confidential clerk you'll have a lot to do with it, do you know. Maybe they'll never come right. Damned uncertain things, American investments."

"Supposing . . . well, what about Delaney?"

"Helen and I are to be married yesterday three weeks. The two transactions were kept strictly apart. Nothing to do with one another. He said so himself; and it was right for him."

I felt myself under obligation to make some kind of protest—in the name of our common society—even though the matter were no immediate concern of mine. It was not easy to do.

"Do you," I began—"well, think . . ."

His lazy mood was gone. The wicker-chair swayed perilously, and nearly surrendered its task with a harsh gasp of despair, as he sat upright, tight now, all himself, with bent brows and straight searching eyes.

"Sure. He started first on the road, and I passed him on it. If he was right to travel that road—and I didn't hear you blame him—then it was right for me, too. I don't hold with monopolies in road-travelling. But that's beside the point. What I want to know is whether you would prefer to call yourself confidential clerk, or secretary, or junior partner in me, or what? Whatever you decide will, of course, be right."

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"Surely the bigger question is that of terms." I believe I would have gone forward with him on any terms. He gave one excitement. He opened up futures before one. Yet, if only to make a shew of judgment, it was wise to say that.

He smiled a little before he replied. Very kindly and friendly was his smile. "You are sure to be underpaid now, so let's say a quarter as much as you are getting now, and a share in me beside. You will be able to make your own terms after; but you won't want to; and I won't make you want to. You can trust me, sure. This is what they call an affair of honour, though I don't mean by that what folk usually do. I mean, this is between us as friends. To shew you what I mean, you're to be my best-man at the wedding."

"I?" It was, after all, a simple request; but he crowded out my little room with his personality, and made that simple request seem amazingly exciting. He leaned forward, looking at me through the dusk, and was like a being of another world, of colossal proportions. Though he were kindly and helpful, yet I was not sorry to cause the light to restore him to the normal.

3.

Does one, at weddings, ever see more than a bride? Well I know how eagerly I went to discover what sort she was who was now destined to be my friend's comrade. Yet I saw but a bride. I was baffled in my quest for a woman. That wonderful shimmering attire, shining with whiteness and brightness, festooned with flowers, and wrapt in a dropping veil that glowed like an emanation, held me at a distance.

Jeremiah Hare, too, was magnificent. He looked taller even than usual. He held himself erect, and walked like a king among the crowd. There was some other change about him, not so easy to define. He looked very handsome, one thought; but his features were stiffly held; his aspect was remote; and he

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seemed to be away at a distance from the company, just as if he had put out an impassable barrier in the air between us and him.

One thing is sure; it was not long before old Delaney found his place. I watched this with much amusement. At the beginning of the day he was irascible and assertive. Annoyingly so. Then he began to look questioningly round at his son-in-law. He finished by suggesting plans to Jeremiah through his daughter. But all the time Jeremiah never threw aside the barrier. The stone sphinx he had become never loosened its limbs or took on the warm colour of life.

Yet he missed nothing. That is sure. It was no chance that plied Delaney's glass with wine till the old gentleman became thick of speech. Jeremiah's eyes were searching him all this time, as though he had melted Delaney's exterior with wine in order to read his soul the more fully.

The only person with whom he conversed at all freely was young Father Laverty, who had conducted the ceremony with the administrator. That I also observed. I had time for observation, for I knew none there save Jeremiah, and him I approached no more nearly than I was able to approach the shining wonder at his side. These approaches, I agreed with myself, were to be left to later days.

The festivities, like the ceremony, were very wonderful and fine. I floated about in them like a twig in shining waters, till the eddies tired me. When the wedded pair left for the City of Galway, I, too, went my way. And for the fortnight of his absence I minded his affairs in the office in Abbey Street in which I was now installed.

CHAPTER FIVE

I.

BOTH sets of eyes were blue; but while Jeremiah Hare's eyes were dark, Helen Hare's were clear and steady. There were times when it seemed as if a flame burned in his eyes, and one had to keep fast hold on one's secrets in order to retain them under that masterful challenge. There were other times when the fire died away, as though the spirit that had looked out so masterfully had withdrawn into their depths to dream and think and laugh. They were wonderful eyes; wonderful in each of their moods, and wonderful in their changes; but they were always dark, even when they burned with flame. Like mountain lakes they were, on which the sun flashed and over which shadows floated, revealing different qualities of depth.

Hers, on the other hand, rarely changed. They were quiet and steadfast. They, too, were penetrating, but there was an even quality in that penetration that was assuring, though they were quietly humorous of folly. They braced and steadied one with their strength where his mystified. They were the counterpart to her bodily movement, which was always peaceful, always assured. They were clear; clear as a lowland lake; so clear that one would have said there was grey in them, too, till one saw that they were perfect blue. They were not, like his, eyes of storm and adventure; but they were eyes that were prepared to abide all storm and all adventure without dimming of their quality.

And the eyes of these my friends were indexes of much in our life together.

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2.

They lived now in the township of Pembroke, and for a while we did not see much of one another. One saw him every day at business, until one wished for a day or two of rest. But he wanted no rest. He always pressed on, in the belief that attack was the simplest form of development; and his methods sometimes filled one with the gravest doubts. Rebuff was the one thing he could not understand. It caused him instantly to fashion new forms of attack. If the neat and mannerly thrust failed, the hilt of his sword came promptly into play. Yet he mastered all detail, and never lost his shrewd direction.

This, he held, was the secret of all success. The difference between adventure and folly was the difference between knowing and not knowing; and he constantly surprised one with a perfect forecast of adventures by his knowledge of the facts, human and material, on which he ventured.

"Facts," he said. "There's nothing but facts. You can't even disguise them till you know what they are. If they are there for assortment according to your fancy, you have to know them first, or you'll have the pattern astray. So never spare anything to find them out, and look well at them without scales on your eyes. Then make up your mind; trust your luck; and never fear. The man that'll deceive best is the man that's never deceived himself, and is never afraid. Anyway, how can you be afraid if you have the courage to look facts in the face? Isn't that the best courage of all?"

Later I surrendered seeking to rebuke him. On this occasion I asked him if he did not think deception should be reprobated.

"Sure," he replied promptly. "Everybody does."

"Yet you practise it."

"Sure again. As everybody does."

"And you praise it?"

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"Everybody does. Do you suppose I'm to start out at this hour of Time making a new law for myself? Come now."

"Isn't it 'come now' yourself? Be logical. How can you both reprobate it and practise it?"

"I can, I do. They're both facts as I find them, William, and I'm not warring on either. Nobody asked how the money was got that built all the churches, and hospitals, and did all the noble charitable deeds. They just praised the folk that did them, and they praised them because they had the money. Facts, William. Facts the whole journey through. They'll praise me, too, in my time, though that isn't a fact yet, except as I see it. That's my gift of foretelling the future because I study facts. Facts are the children of facts, and have a strong family likeness; and that's the secret of all prophesy."

"I wonder if your facts are all of them right."

"Show me one of them that's wrong, and I'll look into it at once. And I'll thank you, William, so I will, for they are the lads I take my direction from. But don't make one cancel another if both have good hardy life in them, for that's where the most of folk make their mistake, and a very easy mistake it is. It's out of the world I want my facts, not out of a book, because it's in the world I've to live, not in a book. Study facts, William; look at them well; and never be afraid to act by them. When you know them you can play with them, for it's not many that do know them. They'll never be beautiful servants till you've bowed to them first as mighty masters. He's a queer quality mason that doesn't study the grain of his stone."

As usual he had his way. I suppose it was by some such method he overcame Delaney. I do not know what happened. Of course, there was no money forthcoming from America. At least I never heard of it, and I now handled most of his affairs. Nevertheless, in due course of time the Stores were floated

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as a public company, and if Delaney was the Chairman, Jeremiah Hare was the Managing Director. That was the prelude to an extension of premises, a wide advertising campaign, and other appropriate developments. Before many years had passed Jeremiah Hare had begun to figure conspicuously in the business life of the city.

3.

Living as we did, he at Pembroke and I at Drumcondra, at opposite ends of the city, we seldom met save in the office. This troubled him constantly, and he as constantly troubled me. Nothing would match his desire but that I should lodge with him; and Helen Hare, too, urged the same on several occasions. Her wish one took for assurance that one would be welcome; and while it is undoubted that he desired to have me at hand in the adventure that was all his life, he desired the personal relation, too. For a man so gracious and of so fine a presence, he was curiously lonely. He was self-sufficient; perhaps he thought himself more self-sufficient than he was; for there is no such thing as self-sufficiency. The most tragic sight is the loneliness that does not realise what is amiss, though it is apparent to the whole world.

After the birth of Martin, his elder son, he was particularly insistent. The wife had become a mother. Yet who desires to break in upon the intimacies of a household? But when after some five years they moved to Rathmines, and he announced that two rooms had been equipped for my petty needs, it would have been grossness to have resisted further.

Then Diarmuid was born—Diarmuid O'Hara, as Jeremiah Hare always called him playfully. He became an especial favourite with the father by virtue of that pet name; but the mother resented it. It may have seemed to her a kind of disowning. Maybe even a dislocation of family intactness. Hard to

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unravel half the instincts of the mind, but the resentment was quite marked.

It was awkward for me, for I quickly saw that I had a link in his life, a clue to the plan of his days, that she had not, that none other had, indeed. What to me was a whimsy, all the enjoyment of which turned on the furtive pleasure it gave him, to her was just irrational. For I am sure he had never spoken to her of his life that lay out of sight. It was the one subject of which he never spoke. That subject lay always in shadow by his tacit will. It may be he did not refer to it in his silent conversations with himself, and thus compelled his stored mind to be revenged upon itself in this way.

It happened by the merest chance that old Father Laverty had given me that clue; and during the challenges between mother and father over the use of this name I realised how dangerous was this gift. Almost with horror I realised this. For quite unaccountably the conviction grew in me that if Jeremiah had become aware of it, estrangement would have come, and our friendship have fallen out of our hands. I was sure that beyond his will this would have been so; even against his desire; but as inevitably as the end is in every beginning. Ask me how I knew this, and I could not answer; yet I had the certitude.

So I was doomed to look on at this conflict, seeing what neither of them could see. Helen Hare was sufficiently withdrawn into herself to see right through her husband; but there was this wall of darkness beyond which she could not see. Perhaps that was why she resented and even feared things that came from beyond that wall. And she had no means of penetrating the wall, for his mind, tacitly to itself, seemed to avoid its memories, and so gave her nothing upon which she could go. Therefore she fought against the pet-name; and I could not help either of them just because I, living in the house with

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them, and sharing so much of their life, could see what they could not—he not less than she, though for quite other causes—and was condemned to silence.

It was then I regretted my decision to share their house and life.

4.

I can best explain this strange conflict—a conflict in him, not less than as between him and her—by turning aside to something apparently quite separate, but surely intimately connected.

For before little Diarmuid was many months old Jeremiah began fretfully to complain of the inconveniences of the offices in Abbey Street where we conducted all his commercial side-ventures, and where, in fact, much of the finance of the Stores also was conducted. The complaints were altogether inexplicable to me, for the premises were central and capacious for our purpose. But he was discontented and unhappy, quite unlike his usual confident self.

This continued for some months. Then he was happy again. He became clear-seeing as before, and as exuberant. It appeared that he had been negotiating during all this time for other offices, and had actually succeeded in persuading some other firm in Dame Street to cede to him the conclusion of their tenancy. One morning he announced that on Monday of the following week we were to move to these other premises, and he handed me, in the ordinary way, the lease of his new tenancy, with instructions to set the offices in Abbey Street for the best price I could get.

To say that I was mystified would be to describe my emotions very mildly. Then I began to think over the whole episode, with the result that, in a curious mood, I made investigation into earlier tenancies of our new offices. I will make no attempt to describe the queer complex of my emotion—a complex in which I believe terror was uppermost, decorative though that word may appear in so ordinary a matter—when I discovered that those very offices had

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once been occupied by the firm of Marcus Blake, Solicitor.

Ridiculous as it may seem, I believe at that discovery I was far more completely aware of the hidden motions of his mind than was Jeremiah Hare himself; and my responsibility of silence oppressed me constantly.

He must sometime have faced the truth of why he came to choose those offices, however unconsciously his steps first turned in their direction. But I am very sure his mind never let him know of the connection I could see between the pet-name at home, flag as it was of challenge and counter-challenge, and the first putting forth of his hand for the touch of an old habitual thing. Of that my instinct was assured. It was no little part, truly, of my embarrassment; for I did not know in what other of his actions I would see (I alone; I singly and apart) the grinning face of a motive out of sight. And I felt like an intruder; an intruder, moreover, falsely represented, inasmuch as my friend did not know that I could spy on him where he could not even spy on himself.

5.

During all this time the challenges continued at home. They continued in fact till the lad grew to his own age of decision, when they were settled by him to the disconcerting of both his parents.

It is wrong to speak of challenges. It would be wrong to speak unwisely even of conflict. Helen Hare was far too well assured to brandish any sort of weapon. She moved firmly within her right; she never moved outside that right to wrangle where others trod; and from her cool heights I think she looked out on all of us men with grave humour as lovable, tolerable, but very futile children. What she saw, she saw; and when men hesitated to drive straight for their mark, as she was wont to drive straight for hers, she was courteous, but kept her

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thoughts to herself. Her criticisms of men of affairs were models of the unsaid. Her clear gaze saw the world very simply, very lucidly; and from her wish to her act was but a single step. She never clamoured, neither was she superior. That was her perfect grace, for her judgment lay in her quietly reflecting eyes. Not she, a person who warred or strove fretfully. When she entered the field the warfare for her had been concluded, whatever might be the case with others. Looking on her I understood perfectly Jeremiah's words that she had chosen him not less than he her; and that, if not so terrific a thing, had yet its simple finality.

Her mind was like her body. I know I was vexed when I first met her, for I had thought of her as costly attired. I never had that thought again, though it was generally true. My later thought was rather of her perfect completeness. I am sure, dressed or undressed, that she was never in undress. She came forth simply to her day, not a stitch out of place, neat, complete and consummately final. Always she was thus as to her body; and always she was thus as to her mind. Cool as to one, and clear-eyed as to the other.

That made her perfect comrade. Even I found this, who was merely in the distant courts of her regard. To her husband she was a tower of strength; and he leaned on her far more than he thought, or would have cared to admit to himself. She admired him, as well as loved him; and though I am sure her clear, through-seeing eyes knew just where the clay was mixed with the bronze, she kept for him a place in her heart as hero. I am sure I would not have cared to be the man, much less the woman, who spoke slightly of him in her presence. Not that she would have said much. Her level eyes and silent lips were deadlier weapons far.

Jeremiah never spoke to me of her save in the abstract, "Women," he said to me once—"women,

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I think, look on us men as overgrown boys; and in a way they're right; but then they never were girls." On another occasion: "Did you ever notice, William, that women, leaving out the butterflies, always turn for comradeship to men, hardly ever to women? I suppose they ought to know."

If she had her fortress, he, too had his. If she read him, he read her. That made their comradeship complete. But while he knew himself being read, I am not sure of her. His range was wider, not only as to ability, which she would have admitted, but as to sight, where I wonder would admission have carried her. By the nature of the case it was her instinct to reduce his complexity to her simplicity, whereas he never misreckoned her simple directness, which he had, too, more than most men.

Yet within the limits of these inevitable imperfections, theirs was a beautiful comradeship. They could be courteous with one another through all the shared intimacy of their life; for neither trespassed on the other's right. Consequently when one speaks of challenges, and even when one thinks of sharp irritation in these challenges, it is proper to think of them exactly as always given or received under the conditions of that courtesy.

6.

The one thing that came against them was the knowledge they did not share. There was this darkness that lay out of her sight because it lay out of his acknowledgments.

He was always down last to breakfast, and he would at once pick the lad out of the high chair with a shout.

"How's my Diarmuid O'Hara? He's not his mother's Diarmuid O'Hara. Never a bit of it. That's all to myself."

Then Helen spoke. Not at once; but when the challenge had passed.

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"Mother's Jerry's going to get on with his breakfast, isn't he? And he'll only heed what his mother bids him." Then she turned to Jeremiah. "He's coming to the age of memory now, and I don't wish him to remember the ridiculous name you're giving him. But he will unless you have care. We don't want to send him through life with a nickname to him, and we don't want his head cumbered up with a lot of nonsense either."

"His name's not Diarmuid; his name's Jerry," piped a shrill voice from the other side of the table as its owner waved a spoon of stirabout like a cudgel about his head.

The mother turned to the new outbreak with her accustomed inflexible administration. "Martin, you must neither throw stirabout at me, nor break on the conversation of your elders." Then she looked over at her husband steadily. There was no need for words. The moral of the interruption was indicated finally.

Jeremiah took her glance not less steadily. It was always a matter of wonder to me, till I reflected more on it, that the one final answer in his possession was the one answer he never used. Of course, he was not aware of it. Had he become aware of it, his need of the pet-name would have passed. So he became, in effect, simply wilful.

"It's a grand old name, do you know. Isn't there grand quality of colour in it? There's a kind of kingship, too. It's not across a huckster's counter you'll get it, packed up with a pound of tea. That sort goes down the ways of the world with a high step and a proud look, and not in the gutters of dirty cities, my dear. God bless his little soul, if he could only live up to it, it'd carry him up, and down the courts of Spain. A nickname, is it? Why, there's places where I'd rather have a nickname, would you believe me, than the usual tabs and labels on articles that have no variety."

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"I didn't know you wanted him for the courts of Spain," she dryly said.

"I'd have him make every place a court of Spain, like his father that went before him. It's not a fiddler in any theatre I'd have a son of mine, playing other people's tunes. Nor a son of yours either, mother."

"I know a father that doesn't neglect the practical world, all the same."

"Practical, glory be. Practical's just a name. Practical's just a painting on cloth. Practical's what you want to make it. I'd have him study the rules of the game, not simply read them. It was old Danny O'Connell who said he'd put a coach and four through any Act of Parliament. And that was practical, too."

She waited a moment again before she replied, and she made her silence a pause before delivery, and therefore full of implied rebuke.

"Those are just words."

"Well, and didn't we begin with words?"

"You know very well what I mean. I mean that anyone can turn any subject into words."

"No, that's just what you can never do. But you can give them different meanings with different words because there's never the same thing under each. Would you believe that?"

"Now, then, Jerry dear, you're spilling all your breakfast. Be a tidy, proper little man."

Always the subject thus turned back upon its beginning. However she touched it with asperity, I suppose as an effectual set-off against his taking it down paths where she did not even pretend to follow him, he remained imperturbable. He knew his mind, and she knew hers, and they each respected the other too well to turn contention into a wrangle.

Yet always there was a real crossing of swords. They always spoke of a thing all the more real to them because it was hidden away out of sight. In

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their hearts I believe both he and she were deeply vexed. As the years passed the vexation went deeper, till the lad himself dealt with it in his own manner. She, as mother, had the true last word; but he disputed that, too, with her in his own way. On this occasion he rose from the table, folding his napkin.

"Well, William, we'd better be getting down to the courts of Spain. Good-bye, my dear. And you, Martin. And my own Diarmuid O'Hara."

7.

Courts of Spain? However wilfully he spoke, there was a certain meaning in his words. The change into the new offices in Dame Street had fired him to new enterprises. Before the birth of little Diarmuid, old Delaney, who had long been a dead letter in the Stores, completed his deadness in all that concerned this world's affairs; and Jeremiah was freer to deal with other things. He had re-organised the Stores thoroughly, and was now Chairman. At once he had brought the rest of his interests to the same test.

The day of the patent drug was done, so he cut it out and kicked it away. It had been at best a ladder that had served his end.

His first act in the new offices was to go over each detail of all his interests, in order, as he said, to bring everything down to muscle and bone. His grasp of detail was great, and his courage as fine. Enterprises that others would have considered profitable enough, he swept away, and among them away went the patent drug. It had vanished everywhere except in Ireland, and now it went in Ireland, too.

"We'll give them something else, William," he said. "It's time for a change. I wonder was there ever a time when people liked the good old things. If there was, folk have changed since. Even if it's the same water and salt, it's as well to have a new

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name for it, if it's only to keep others away. It's just to have something to believe in; something that will bring the mind victory over the body. For what you need is novelty, if it's only a new pair of shoes on the old two feet. And, do you know, I want a change, too, by the same token. Not you, William; you're different; but it has lost its bright eyes for me. It's time for a change if we're to keep moving."

So he went with me through all his ventures one by one, testing and examining them with skilled attention, re-adjusting the weights of each and cutting away those that held him back. It was for me an education, for even ventures that were ordinarily profitable were sacrificed if they shewed any disinclination to move at the pace he now required.

Then one day he brought Patrick Bronty into the office. Both he and I shared the one office at the back of the building. He had refused to have it otherwise. The room was large, and my desk stood in the far corner, whereas his faced the door in the centre of the room. Mine was encumbered with many papers, while his was always bare—that being our relation to one another. My back being towards him, I did not necessarily turn if anyone came in with him. But on this occasion he had at once called me; and I turned to see a tall, thin, taciturn-looking man, with an ascetic face and eyes that never seemed to be fixed directly on any object. They looked casually at me as we shook hands, and they then dulled to any further interest in me. If the back of his eyes had had painted on them the mere semblance of their front, I would have said that, having turned the front towards me for the purpose of registering my likeness for future need, he had turned them back again to survey the more interesting things that were happening in his mind. Similarly his long lean fingers closed round my hand in an instant's sudden pressure, and then were withdrawn again.

Jeremiah sat at his desk, and Patrick Bronty and I

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sat to left and right of him. I looked at Jeremiah; Jeremiah looked at Patrick Bronty; and Patrick Bronty looked in his own mind. Well, anyhow, that was the order of interest, for Jeremiah had not brought him in for the humour of his company certainly.

"Bronty's a chemist," Jeremiah said by way of introduction. "He is after coming from Germany, the nation of chemists, where he has been studying. Isn't that so?"

"I was in Germany," Bronty said, speaking both flatly and crisply, however he did it. The crispness was a matter of accent, however, and I guessed the North.

"It's an important point. The folk across the water will respect that because they fear it. . . . He has a theory that human beings have been using up all one kind of chemical because of the modern industrial strain. Like land that has been cropped with one kind of growth is exhausted, so men and women are exhausted. Not ill, whatever the ailment, but just exhausted. You can change the crop on land, but you cannot with folk, for we've got civilisation, a thing we never got before, and it's never going to change. So that we've got to manure men and women with just that one sort of chemical that civilisation is cropping out of them, and the only way to do that is patent medicines. They don't live but one kind of life, and that one kind of life is using up one chemical, and we've got to come along—he and I and you and some others who want to do folk a good turn and ourselves as well—and manure them out of little bottles. Isn't that it?"

"It is so." Patrick Bronty spoke slowly, but his words were sharply pronounced. "It's simple enough. Some people do say that the illnesses of the world were always the same. That's not true. Life's as various as the constituents comprising the universe, and is always turning up new sides of itself. The body would be perfect for all its needs if we

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could find the normal life for it; but perfection and normality only exist as a theory to begin from. Consequently we've only to find the nature of the abnormality to find the nature of the imperfection. It differs in every age, but when you have it found, you have isolated the root-cause of all the diseases and illnesses of that age. It's a matter of chemistry. Always a matter of chemistry. One kind of life uses up one of the chemical constituents more quickly than the others; and the withdrawal of that constituent—the upsetting, do you see, of perfection and normality in respect of that one part—causes all the characteristic ills of that time. Restore that one chemical, or set of cognate chemicals—they must be cognate, the nature of the strain being the same—and you become the universal healer of that part of society so affected. Now I have an analysis here. . . .”

He drew a paper from his pocket, and went into a long dissertation, concluding with, as I had expected, a quack medicine. The word was his. He anticipated the thought in my mind.

“Some people will call this a quack medicine,” he said.

“Folk like quack medicines,” I encouraged him.

“Sure,” said Jeremiah. “But not in this country. They're too healthy.”

Patrick Bronty vouchsafed both of us a look of his eyes—the front of his eyes—one after the other.

“Quack is a general term,” he said, “and means nothing consequently. We have to isolate. There's the impostor; but there's the scientific induction also. Those are the only sorts, and they exist within as well as without the medical profession. What do most physicians? They tap our trunks, make a guess—it must be a guess, for the body is a closed trunk, of which only the outside is on view—and prescribe according to the *Pharmacopœia*. Or else they induce and deduce, just as I am doing, according to the particular case. But there are general ailments as

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well as particular, and the general are the base of the particular. The profession is a vested interest; and Science, true Science, knows nothing of vested interests. It's concerned purely with the data before it."

So Patrick Bronty came into our life, with his curious influence.

8.

That night Jeremiah and I discussed Patrick Bronty. Or rather, we discussed his quack medicine. My own sitting-room in the return of the house had now become the scene of many a revealing discussion. Thither I withdrew after dinner, and thither he often followed me. My books lined the walls, with a few chosen pictures that I valued. The window looked out over the lawn towards a row of sisterly poplars that, effectively or ineffectively, in summer or in winter, screened us from the other houses with which, an hundred yards away, we stood back to back, and with which, but for those poplars, we would have exchanged those hundred furtive indelicacies that none would have suspected from the grave frontward we showed to the world. During the summer those poplars shivered like ghosts, clothed in a white silky texture that rippled as they moved, and during the winter they were nebulous and uncertain like ghosts that barely came within sight, by reason of the beam of light that fell on them from my window each night till well after midnight had sounded from the distant tower. Either I turned to the pleasant company of my books, or Jeremiah's familiar step and knock warned me that his company was to take their place. And it had been his frequent practice thus comradely to break in upon me. Three or four evenings of a week he would come.

That night I had expected him. After Patrick Bronty had left he had made no further reference to him, and had been silent and reserved. That was the infallible sign of an evening visit.

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"Well," he said at once, "what did you think of Bronty?"

"I didn't like him," I replied promptly. "There was something about him I didn't like. And anyway, what is the use of a man whose eyes look into instead of looking out of his head?"

"It depends where there's most to see, no doubt. Most of what's outside was first seen inside, you know; and if we saw better inside we'd have more to satisfy us outside. Sure. Don't you think he has something inside worth getting out?"

I looked across at him. He sat opposite me, with his legs crossed, smoking his cigar with his usual detached criticism of it, and of everything else because of it.

"Are you going to float his drugs?" I asked at once.

"Sure. It's sound, what he says. It's commonsense. There are folk who say that commonsense is the most uncommon thing in the world. I amn't rightly sure what that means, if it means anything at all, which I doubt. But I am sure that each body thinks that what everybody thinks, or is just on the hap of thinking, is his own discovery made in a lonely world. In his heart that's what he thinks, whatever about his humility. Just flatter him with that, and he'll engage with you. If you can flatter him more by making it look like science, with all about chemical constituents and abnormality, you're a made man, William. Isn't it what I'm always saying, that advertising is just a big public meeting? There's the matter of a very fine meeting in the bent that Bronty's engaged in, and that's the same as saying it's naturally fine advertising material, and that again's the same as saying his drugs'll sell. It's all apt; and he has a fine clear way of making it look as apt as it is. Besides that, William, he's right, when you look at it; and that makes it all the better. Benefactors of men, that's

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what we'll be. Menders of a broken civilisation, just by replacing the part that's worn out. . . . What do you think, anyway?"

"I don't say he's not right. He seems to have worked it out to his own satisfaction; and no doubt there's a great deal in what he says. I'm not sure that this civilisation is worth patching. Back to a country life we want to get."

I was checked by his searching eyes.

"I wasn't talking about books," he said, "I was talking about facts. I was talking about our masters and our servants, not about our hobbies. Whatever happens after, if we can patch it up for our time, and get properly rewarded for the work, isn't that good enough for us? Not that the world isn't good as it is—except for the poor devils under-foot, whom God help!"

He spoke these last words with such great, with such unexpected, feeling, that I was silenced for some minutes. Naturally I was silenced. We had trespassed on the forbidden land, where I could see so much more clearly than he knew the way his thoughts went. So I turned to another subject present in my mind all the time.

"I don't see you, Jeremiah, working very well with Patrick Bronty all the same, if you'll allow me to say so."

He looked fixedly at me, as though to search out all my mind.

"No?" he said. "Why do you say that?"

"I couldn't tell you why. Maybe because it seems to me he is looking at different things . . . in a different way, too. He thinks there's nobody in the world but himself, if I don't mistake. He's an unpleasant man, I think. I don't see you two agreeing."

"Not like we two?"

"No; certainly not like we two," I said very earnestly. I was surprised at that question.

"I thought that, too; but we'll see. Men are just

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sticks to bind together, do you know; and sure enough some don't bind rightly with others. But we'll see. Men are just facts also, same as other facts, and we weren't asked what way we'd have them. If they're fit for their job, that's enough for the day; and, glory be, there aren't many that are, in the set-out. I reckon that what he says he'll do; he'll do from first to last and up to time and quality; and that's all I ask from any man whatever. If you can find that once in a hundred thousand times, William, you'll prove a lucky man, believe me. Odds are you'll fail."

I felt he was running away from the unpleasant, and so I brought him back to it.

"Fit for what job, Jeremiah? Suppose the job you want him to be fit for isn't the job he has in mind? There's something about that man, if I don't mistake. . . ."

My question was never finished, and was never answered; for at the moment Helen Hare entered. It was seldom she entered my den—unless, that is, it were while I was away, as part of those household duties the unseen accomplishment of which held us in her constant debt.

"I am breaking in on you two," she said; "but there's a Mr. Bronty downstairs wants to see you, Jeremiah. He says you asked him to call, though you never said anything to me about it."

Jeremiah rose at once.

"We'll all go downstairs," he said. "I'll want you, William; and, of course, you, my dear."

Helen Hare brushed away some dust from his coat. "Is it business?" she asked, looking up at him.

He laughed unexpectedly. "A business man's home's like a barrister's," he said. "It's a net to catch birds. . . . Is Diarmuid O'Hara asleep?"

While she looked at him with steady eyes, her lips smiled.

"Now you're just teasing," she said, "and I don't mind that."

CHAPTER SIX

I.

As I thought, Patrick Bronty proved stubborn material. However he may have spent his days looking within his own mind, the plainest records of commonsense seem to have found no register there, if one may judge of that mind by his course of action through the world.

Jeremiah had interested a number of his friends, who very justly had great faith in his judgment, in this new venture. A good mass of capital was ready to launch it, when the difficulties occurred.

It was agreed that Ireland, unvisited for good and for bad by industrial strain, was not a natural market for the venture. Certainly it was agreed; but even in this beginning Bronty, though he said little, was clearly irked by the plain fact, just as though one had alleged some crime against the nation by the mere statement of that plain fact. But Jeremiah proceeded to argue that the right place in which the factory should be set up was Liverpool. Then the trouble began.

"Do you suppose," said Jeremiah calmly, but watchfully, too, "that Englishmen are going to buy stuff of this kind manufactured in Ireland?"

"Why not?" Bronty answered. He favoured us with the front of his eyes during the whole of this conversation. There was no scientific speculation about them now. They burned with vengeful fire. One would have supposed that he was encompassed with deadly enemies, instead of colleagues and supporters of his ideas. I never saw such malignancy, such intensity of hatred.

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Jeremiah did not at once answer. He quietly drew and lit his unfailing cigar—his one luxury in the world, now become a necessity. I could not bear to watch him do so. My mind bled with the memories it awoke in me, memories not a year old, memories loaded with a nation's tears and ruin, loud with keening at night and blank with dismay in the light of the sun. My mind was with the dead Chief; and I turned my face away; when I heard his voice in reply.

"That's not a very reasonable sort of question, do you know; though that's no reason why I shouldn't answer it. Because of their mothers' milk. Because of their history-books. Because of Rule Britannia. Because Britons never, never, never will be slaves. Because of the sun that never sets. Because we're no better than black men. Because of a thousand things that don't appear to matter, and because of a business round the corner that does. Mainly because of facts."

Patrick Bronty slowly turned about on Jeremiah. Taken along the line of his own twist of mind, he seemed rather astray at first. Jeremiah was altogether admirable.

Bronty struck the table with the fingers of his hand. "We can change facts," he said.

"Sure. You can, in the end . . . sometimes. But only by use. You must use them first. They get warm with use, and then you can bend them slowly. We must go to Liverpool to start that use, do you know. Tricky things, facts, Bronty. You're not suggesting, I suppose, that they'll buy these bottles and these tins if we start putting your stuff into them here in Dublin."

"Why not?"

"But do you?"

It was a straight battle between their eyes, and we others were spectators merely. Each of their lips were closely pressed; each of their brows were bent; there was fire in both their eyes. But while Patrick

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Bronty's eyes were almost red with anger, Jeremiah's were clear and keen.

"I do, yes," said Bronty at length, truculently enough.

Jeremiah's eyes lost their exceeding clearness, and became almost kindly.

"You give them credit for more generosity than I do, then," he said softly, watching his cigar.

Bronty became cold as ice at that.

"I give a wolf credit for generosity. I'll set Attila up as a professional nursemaid. I'll make a hyæna the wet-mother for my children if ever I have any. I'll grow roses in hell-flame. God in heaven!"

Patrick Bronty's very hatred saved us. For there were some in our company there who would, I truly believe, have thrown aside the whole project at Jeremiah's words but for that. Our company seemed like many another thing in Ireland, to be about to come to shipwreck on politics. Jeremiah, however, was very steady and adroit. He became the centre and convening-point of all in the room. Yet his immediate attention was given to Bronty.

"Well, then, we must play them. The business will be ours here in Dublin. Ourselves we're looking after; not them. We are all Irishmen in it." His glance surveyed the company.

"Of sorts," said Bronty.

"That's how the world's made. Of sorts. It's all a question of finding out the sorts, and not bringing theories out of books for their discovery. Unless you find your facts fairly you'll fail; and failure's the one sin that Life never forgave yet. I know that, mind you. It's not out of books I learned that, but by kicking my bare toes against the stones in the road. And success is the one thing that everybody understands. Get to that good house, man dear, and your health will be drunk in it, whatever road you came to it. We've had enough of failure here; and we're due for the success we're to make in this business."

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Jeremiah spoke with a curious hardness and bitterness that I had not heard before from him. It had a marked effect on Patrick Bronty. Perhaps it was intended to have that effect. Certainly he became much more tractable. He still held to his objection, however.

"Is it go out of Ireland and employ foreign workmen, then?" he asked.

"Why not?" I interjected. For I was afraid for some in the company.

Patrick Bronty looked round at me with calculating eyes. "Ah," he said. "And it's not a year since Charles Stewart Parnell died."

How I hated him for that stroke. It was cunningly chosen; though I would have sworn he considered the Chief just a temporiser.

"Come, gentlemen," said Sir Anthony Shaw, saving us; "what has all this to do with the business before us?"

"Sure," said Jeremiah, in great good humour. "Business: that's what we have to consider. And success in that business. Our foremen in Liverpool will all be Irishmen without doubt. No need to ask for that. But we're making goods for sale, and that's all we have to mind. Surely you see that." He turned to Patrick Bronty.

"I'll not go abroad. My laboratories must be here. Let you do what you decide, but I'll not stir from that, any road."

Jeremiah was quick as a flash to come before the protest that pended in several places. Yet his manner was unperturbed.

"Sure. The laboratories should be where the directorate is, and that is Dublin City. That was clear all the time, and didn't require mention. But we have the other things to settle first."

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2.

Jeremiah was never more admirable than when holding together a team of that character. He had made up his mind very clearly as to just what he required, and he struck straight for his goal. Yet we had never till then met so difficult a problem as Patrick Bronty proved to be. It was his one large capable hand that held two such different persons as Bronty and Sir Anthony Shaw together in the single purpose.

In fact, a quite unnatural friendship came into being between them. There was nothing that could properly account for it. It was Bronty's hand that wrote the well-known advertisements, neat in strange old lettering and scientifically phrased, that began within a year thereafter to appear in the newspapers. He it was who worded them in that slightly pedantic phrasing that held scientific aloofness in one hand and public simplification in the other. But it was Jeremiah who inspired them; and it was Jeremiah who gave what he called vulgar glamour to the whole. And, at the other end, it was through Sir Anthony that Jeremiah made the directorate of the company read like the directorate of a bank, with its craftily assorted titles and plain sense. None other could have held that queer team together. None could have done it but the one man who subordinated everything to the success he had in mind.

Never did I hold him higher than in the opening years of that enterprise. He was wonderful. Failure was the one thing he never received within his reckoning. He said in his own exaggerated way: "There's always some road to the House of Success if you're only willing to tread it. Many aren't: they've either sick stomachs or sick hearts. They forget the good cheer and the lifted admiration of the world at the end. But I've made up my mind, and I've no fear,

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do you know. So that Success is right for me with ordinary luck, William."

That was said in the early days of the venture. But all things did not go well. At first, as all will remember, there was remarkable interest. All were in high humour at our offices. Even Patrick Bronty became less scientifically courteous with Sir Anthony, and favoured him with the front rather than the painted back of his eyes. The distinction may not seem much, but it was noteworthy enough, for our chemist was now an abstract scientific machine borne down unwillingly amid the shuffle of a temporising world. But then the interest abated; the public whimsey turned away; and black days came when the sales hardly covered the costs of advertising, let alone the weekly charges. Then it was that the only faces undismayed were Jeremiah's and Bronty's—and the latter's did not count, for I believed it was no face at all, but simply a mask behind which burned the unconsumed fires of his passion.

It was a very serious situation. From the vantage point of Jeremiah's private offices in Dame Street I was able to see within the workings of many things, and could perceive the Western shrewdness of his mind. I could in short see how carefully he arranged the finances of the Stores so that he always had a rampart within which to retire in safety. He was just to himself there. Yet he liberated as much finance as possible to fight this other fight.

I suggested to him that possibly it might be as well to cut our losses. Much was involved, surely, but much more was being involved at a great rate each week. Better not to dare too far than to dare too greatly. But he would not hear me.

"No, William," he said, walking firmly up and down our room with head erect. "A man's luck is his all. If he loses that his day is done in the world, and it's time for him to think of his end before it finds him first. Nor will he lose his luck till he's

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afraid he will. It isn't these damned bottles and tins that are failing. It's me. And I won't fail. I took that decision long since, so I did—in circumstances you know nothing of, nor won't. I hold to it now. With all of me I hold to it now. It's up between my luck and me at this minute, and we'll see who'll last it out best. As long as it doesn't put fear in me I'm bound to win. The minute it does I'm done. And I'm not afraid, William—not as long as I've Shaw's money and Talbot's money, and Doherty's money, and a bit of my own to throw into the fight. Why should I be?" he laughed. "But there's more in it than tins and bottles and normalities and imperfections and chemicals. Much more. Sure, William. It's me and my luck. I don't touch failures. I said I never would; and by gad, I won't. I'll look my luck straight in the face, like I've looked everything else, and when it sees that I'm not afraid of it, it'll be my good friend to the finish. For if you haven't luck for your friend you've nothing else. Sure. Nothing could be surer."

He was unwontedly moved. He paced up and down our room. Then suddenly he went out; and I knew he had gone to the laboratory on Eden Quay.

He was in fact deeply moved all this time, though possibly others would not have noticed it as closely as I. During that terrible two years, when all were crying failure about him, and seeking a likely escape, neither did he flinch nor would he let others turn aside. He was like a warrior in the ford, fighting an unseen enemy before him and heartening his hosts behind. But that his face was more constantly flushed, and his manner more imperative, none would have noticed a difference in him. The fierce strength he only sometimes called upon was in constant employment, drawing up all his energies and nervous force. It was astonishing at board meetings to see ten well-schooled men afraid to mention before him the one word they were resolved to utter. They were

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afraid like schoolboys before him, while he appeared afraid of nothing, sweeping them unwillingly into the fight with him, drawing constantly on the financial resources of the Stores, as, in his own phrase, he threw his challenge into the face of his luck.

It was an amazing two years, for it lasted so long. The business details that occupied his attentions, the advertising schemes he drafted, and the thousand laborious plans that occupied all his hours, may have been all of that fight that others saw; but to me the foe was impalpable and the more intimate because so apparently remote. To me he was fighting spirits of the air. No, not spirits of the air, but a spirit from the nether world, from his own nether world. Certainly it was no mere commercial fight that he fought, the issues of which are issues of ordinary weal, or even of ordinary woe. To me it was something wholly different. Different in quality, different in kind. As different as death is from sleep.

At least to me it seemed so. Perhaps I was assisted to my knowledge by a curious information that came to me.

3.

In the second winter, when Jeremiah had begun to draw heavily upon the credit of the Stores, I was sitting in my room one evening, forgetting all else in a book of ancient tales, when a knock fell on my door, and, in answer to my call, Helen Hare entered.

I rose at once, and escorted her to my own chair. I wondered a little at her coming, for she had never come before. But Jeremiah was out, dining with Sir Anthony (he was always dining with one or other of the directors these times), and I presumed she had come for company, and I was somewhat angry with Jeremiah.

She sat in my chair, her cool and queenly self.

"You are snug enough up here, William," she said, making as though she had never before been

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within the room, with that finished discretion that was her wont. "Martin's just away to bed."

"He's getting a big lad," I said.

"Yes, indeed. Jerry, I think, will be one of the stockier sort. His bones weren't built for bigness. But there's more in him than ever there was, or than there ever will be, in Martin. Martin's just a boy who will grow to be a man; like most other boys, William, that ever grew to be men. But Jerry's the kind that mothers love because mothers never understand them. We can never properly love what we can exhaust, don't you think?"

"That doesn't apply to mothers surely?"

"Ah, mothers are women, too. And women are mothers. It's a mistake to think that there's a difference. I see fathers that are lovers of their daughters, though perhaps they don't realise it, and I am sure mothers are lovers of their boys. Why shouldn't they be? It's splendid to love your boys."

"I suppose that is so surely. I hadn't considered it. And do you think they are jealous of them?"

"Jealous?" The faintest of shadows crossed her face, and pained me as it crossed, for surely she knew nothing of jealousy. Then her face cleared again, and she was her equable self again. "Of course they are. Did you ever know of a mother that wasn't jealous when her boy was to be married? Or a father that wasn't jealous of his daughter? No, William, we're not different kinds of beings at different times. We're all sorts of beings at the one time."

"That's what I say. Good and bad altogether."

"You're a wise man, William. Good and bad altogether. And the two slip in and out with one another in a queer kind of way; and many a time one could dislike the good and like the bad, though that's a strange thing to say. It's true enough. I don't think Martin will be either good or bad. He's simply a boy growing up to be a man. But little Jerry, I

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think, will be very much one or very much the other, according as Life takes him. Indeed, he may be very much both. That's what makes him so much a responsibility, and so much a dear. I am sure we can never love truly those whom we can understand thoroughly. There's always a deal of vexation in the heart of love, I believe. He's only a little fellow now. But he's deep and silent. My mother's heart tells me I'll never understand him. And that's why I love him so."²

"Do you think it right that parents should love one child more than another?" I asked.

When I had asked the question I felt I had said something inappropriate, for Helen laughed. Her laughter was very soft and controlled.

"Oh, you must never shew it," she said. "But the heart's entitled to its secrets, and we don't change women by making them mothers. We only make them more women than ever. Don't you know that all women are mothers from the time they first had dolls, and did you ever know the little mothers of the nursery that didn't love one doll more than another? Why, we even make our husbands our children, and like to draw them down upon our breasts . . . though they don't at all like it sometimes . . . till they are in trouble and distressed. That's why the times of anxiety and distress are the great moments of married life to a woman. That's where we're most selfish, because we sometimes wish for trouble because of the opportunity of making our husbands our children. After all, aren't we entitled to this; for aren't such occasions our hour, and aren't we the perfect mother of that hour? There's nothing worse for a woman than to be robbed of that hour when it comes."

I said nothing, for there was something in the way she spoke these words that made me feel that I had trespassed near a tragedy. Her eyes had dropped, and her face was clouded. I, too, dropped

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my eyes, and looked upon the flames that danced above the coals, while the silence passed between us. When I looked up her face was clear again, and her eyes were steady and clear. The clouds had passed, and her calm was almost reproving.

"You must be having anxious times at business," she said.

"They are anxious," I replied; "very anxious."

"Why should they be so very anxious?" she asked.

I was surprised. That she should ask such a question, with Jeremiah committed beyond his credit in a venture that seemed destined to failure, was certainly surprising. Was it possible she did not know of the depth of his commitments? That was incredible; for I knew that he always spoke freely with her of his business affairs. Not that he consulted her. That would have been too formal a description of the counsel as common as the perfume that flowers exchange together. How then came it that she should ask such a question of me, whilst Jeremiah, even though he were always controlled, and even at times exuberant, was staking more and more heavily in his fight against that unseen antagonist, his Luck?

"Well, you know," I answered with difficulty, "Veros is not going well, whatever's the cause of it. It seems to be kind of wedged somewhere. And that's troublesome. But Jeremiah told you of that, of course."

"He said something of it. But I was so bothered with Jerry that I hadn't time to heed him." I thought she spoke without conviction, but I may have been mistaken. She spoke lightly, and glanced aside at the fire, and that may have deceived me. "But go on," she said, turning toward me and smiling. "Tell me."

"Of course, it's bothersome," I said, stumbling ahead. "Don't you know, it means money. Money

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has got to be found some place. As you know, Jeremiah's not the sort to admit defeat. He says he is fighting against his luck. I don't think he's a superstitious kind of a man, and that's just his whimsical way of putting it. But it means drawing rather heavily on his credit, and also on the credit of others. Very heavily indeed. I advised him some time ago to cut the losses. But he wouldn't."

"No, Jeremiah wouldn't. But go on."

"Well, I don't know that there's much more in it. It's just that. He keeps very firm and confident. He's the soul of us all, and laughs down every fear. But I don't like it when a man starts to talk of his luck, I must say. It's his masterfulness that keeps everyone keyed to the pitch he himself sets. We all have every confidence in him, I believe—though if a person hasn't he'd better not say anything of it."

"Is Jeremiah worried, do you think?" She spoke with strange lightness, as by way of an aside. Her face was turned away from me, and I could not see her eyes; but her voice, I noticed, had just the thought of a quaver in it. That made me sorry I could not see her eyes. For I stumbled ahead rather in the dark with her.

"No doubt he must have his times of anxiety. That would be only natural. But he never shews it, not even to me who am his intimate. I must say I don't like his talking about his luck. It seems so superstitious, do you know. But he is always firm and proud and confident and . . . masterful. It's so splendid working with a man like that. He's for all the world like our wonderful Chief, whom God rest. He never changes his front to the foe, even if he does call it his Luck."

"Do you know anything of his past life? That is to say before he met me. Before even America."

What was I to say? She still spoke with that lightness—that rather calculated lightness. But what was I to say? I had to lie. I could not break the confidence I felt Fate had imposed on me. Far

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is it from my desire ever to be a casuist; but this was surely a case when, to choose the higher honour, I was compelled to lie. Anyway, on the instinct of the moment I had lied outright before I knew what I did. Though in truth I did not know. Not for certain anyway.

She made no move. She sat there with her arms limp in her lap, and her face drooped aside, looking on the fire. It came to me from her that she did not believe me, but accepted my statement as an assertion of honour, with the fine instinct she ever showed.

Some moments passed. Moments so unusually tense that a curious thrill of excitement took hold of me, making my heart to beat quicker. Then she turned to me, and her eyes were very bright, but very steady and penetrating. She was, I could see, tensely wrought, but firmly held in her usual control.

"Now I'm going to take you into my confidence," she said. "My strictest confidence."

I bowed in silent consent. Had I served my inclination, I would have fled to the hills rather than have stayed. A horror of fear took hold of me. Yet none, knowing that fear, would have thought it communicated from this clear-eyed, smiling, so-gracious lady who sat opposite me holding me in the unflinching regard of her eyes.

"You know," she continued, while I miserably listened, "how healthy Jeremiah has always been. I know he has a naturally splendid constitution, but I believe this has partly been the result of will-power, too. He keeps even the opposition of ill-health at a distance by his pride of will, I'm sure. Brains, some people say, he has. Will, I think it is. An attitude of mind. Something he has adopted. You'll know what I mean, William, even if I'm not clear in my own mind what it is. Directly he puts his head on his pillow of a night he's away, and there's not a stir out of him till the morning. Sometimes I think it's because he decides to do that even. He always slept

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well—until lately. Of course, he must have had dreams. You know how vexed and distant people sometimes are when they rise, troubled by the memory of a bad dream or trying to bring back the memory of a good one? Well, I have seen him like that. Cranky sometimes, and sometimes under a cloud. But even the sun has to throw aside its morning mists, and nobody takes any notice of that. All that is changed now. . . .”

She was silent a long while. No doubt she was unaware of the time that passed. Her glance had gone past me over my shoulder. To me the silence seemed like a terrific suspension of time. Something unnatural, unbegotten of circumstance. Then her glance returned to me, and she continued as though no time had intervened between her words.

“Quite changed. Some months ago it was when I first noticed it. He tossed about restlessly all the night. He was asleep all the time, mind you, if I couldn’t say so much for myself. He never answered if I spoke to him. Of a morning he would awake bathed in perspiration, and was most vexed if I made any reference to it. That was unlike him, too, the poor dear. So I never said anything to him after that, but it troubled me greatly, of course. Perhaps it was simply his pride that anything should be out of the ordinary with him. But now it’s worse again. . . . Of course, William, what I’m telling you now is in the strictest confidence.”

I assured her of that. I could have further assured her that I would have given anything to have escaped her confidence. That would have been impossibly unworthy of me. But I felt as if I knew what was coming, and I was afraid of it. All the more afraid because I could not have said what I knew, or what in the world was coming.

“I know in my heart he would be terribly cross if he knew I had been speaking to you about it. Don’t you see, he doesn’t himself know anything

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about it. At least, I don't think he does. I've felt as if I hadn't dare refer to it, in some curious way. And now I've got to talk about it to somebody, and you and I are the only real friends he has, he's such a queer man. . . . Now, whatever it is he dreams about, not only he tosses about, but he talks in his sleep. . . ."

I started in my chair, for this seemed quite unlike my friend, who never even talked randomly when awake, except expansively to me; who was too intent and concentrated to do much talking about his purposes. I listened now intently.

". . . Such strange talk, too. Sometimes you'd think he was selling papers like the boys in the street. What kind of queer fancy might that be, I'd like to know. Then he whimpers—actually whimpers, William—and complains of the cold, and uses such horribly bad vengeful words. Instead of lying out straight in the bed, as he usually does, he huddles up, and drags all the clothes about him. And he's not cold, William; he's pouring with perspiration. And other things. He has even begged pennies, cursing such queer curses, not in English at all. He doesn't always do these things, you know. Mostly he talks to himself, as he might talk of business now, but so hardly and vengefully, ignorantly too, as he may have talked many years ago. That's why I wanted to know if you knew anything of his past life."

"You know," I answered feebly, "Jeremiah never talks of his past days. He always lives for the future."

"I know. But I thought he may have said something to you." Her glance was keen and penetrating, as if to search out all my secrets.

"He has never said a word to me," I answered, truthfully enough; "and I could never get him ever to refer to it."

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What she had just told me shocked me deeply. In face of it, whatever I might have done at another time, I could now say nothing of what I knew, little enough though that was. Heaven knows I would have defended it with my life. It was as much as I could do, in the acute distress of mind, to sit quietly in my seat. But as she sat opposite me, held in her firm, fine, perfect restraint, I had to do the same, when, without her there, I would probably have wandered foolishly about the room, wringing my hands futilely and making idle moan. The veils from one dearer to me than self had been torn aside, and how I would have covered my eyes to forbear seeing what I was compelled to look upon.

"That is true," she said. "It's not that he wishes to hide anything. He just does."

"Yes," I echoed feebly. "He just does."

"But this goes on every night. Well, no; not every night. Sometimes he sleeps heavily—never his old peaceful sleep. But many nights, very many nights. It's hard to hear him talking in that way, and not to be able to do anything—not even to be able to say anything, when that is just the hour when a woman most wants to be herself. Why, do you know, the very accents of his voice are changed. You know, he speaks with distinction ordinarily—with his own kind of distinction. He doesn't in his sleep. And he seems so troubled, the poor dear. I wish I could do something."

There were tears in her eyes, and that nearly broke me altogether. Why was I given the knowledge I had?

Then we heard the front door close, and his voice calling for her. I felt instantly guilty. I looked to her, expecting her at once hurriedly to leave the room, But she did not stir.

After a while we heard him coming up the stairs. He entered the room in his hearty fashion.

"Oh, here you are." He was the picture of health

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and masterfulness. His height had never seemed so majestic, or his eye so bright and keen.

"William and I were having a mighty discussion. If you will run away and leave me, I must find other company." She, too, was as composed and as perfectly as ever the queen of herself.

"Sure thing. Those are my penalties and William's advantages. Suppose we make it a party of three."

The earth, having opened to shew its depths, had closed again with not a rent to shew a wound.

4.

With such knowledge in my possession, imagine my emotions in the plain commercial matter of a failing quack medicine.

The months thereafter were to me months of agony, literal agony. I looked constantly on Jeremiah, expecting to see some kind of change happen on him—the perfect exterior to be torn away, and horrible wounds to appear—but he was always firm and strong, and never disconcerted. He was always the winner of battles, he against whom Fate was now so terribly conspiring. He was always the confident director of success. To think of him as the container of a tragedy seemed ridiculous; would have seemed more than ridiculous had one mentioned such a thought to one's fellows. Yet I was ever looking for the visible signs of it, and ever being disconcerted by the robust and masterly appearance. I was ever looking for that appearance to crumble before my eyes, and ever beholding its conviction of reality.

True, there were times of irritation, when the nerve seemed like to break. That was a different thing. That might always have occurred in a vexed situation. Yet it was chiefly at times such as these that I expected the earth to open at my feet. For I was convinced that now at these moments his was the

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tense irascibility of a man shaken to his depths. I would almost, then, have put out my hand to steady the pillar that shook upon its base. But it was not necessary. Instantly the confident control was reasserted. The earth, that seemed like to break, was firm, and the sun smiled again. Whatever turmoil shook the nights, with upheaval of elder horrors, the days were held—or at least seemed held—in strong confident possession.

As time went on, inevitably, the near sense of unreality weakened. It had to be so. Do not decent folk live on the side of a volcano and heedlessly drink their daily wine? Yet that was worse again. It does not make unreality the less that one shrugs at it, surely.

Each time Jeremiah increased his mounting commitments the agony increased in me. It was through me the financial arrangements were made that drew out the blood from the rest of his life and poured it into the ravenous veins of Patrick Brontë's theory of a rotting civilisation. What matter if civilisation did rot? Was not Jeremiah more worth than an hypothesis? I took occasion to avoid Brontë like a plague; and I did not dislike him the less because he and Jeremiah were the only unperturbed ones of us all. What matter that he was unrelenting and calculating? That was merely the chance of the man. Perhaps only the child of his bitter creed. Surely no more.

For it was now my hand, as his financial assistant, that drove him to his tortured nights. My hand, it was, that brought back the unknown evils of desperation he had triumphed over and thrown aside—neither triumphed over nor thrown aside, as it now so terribly appeared, in this strange life of ours, that is not a sequence of many different things, but an intact whole, interchangeable and various. I became the conjurer of his dreams. Little marvel that my nights, too, became as tortured as his. My dreams

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were of his dreams. His nightmares were the walking shadows of mine.

Furtively I sought to instil into him the suggestion that it was perhaps time for us to withdraw from a pending tragedy—a tragedy that would involve his wife, his two sons, and the household of comfort, of security. But he saw through me instantly.

“Turn back, is it? Isn’t that just what they want me to do? The man that turns back lies down at the feet of Chance. He’ll become the football of his luck, and he’ll deserve no more, faith. No, no. I know all that’s in this. There’s a good deal more in it than ever you see. I’ll fight it out to the finish. I’ve many a stroke yet left to play.”

“But supposing,” I said, “you do go on to the finish, and it all ends in failure, and Helen and Martin and little Diarmuid are all involved in the smash.”

I had intended to be desperate. Heaven knows how much it meant to me to be so merciless. But I would have recalled my words if I could. For the first time he blanched. He had, I conceive, been putting that thought behind him; and now it was before him. And his face grew white and old. Even his eyes aged. His lips quivered at first; and then his jaws set merciless and cruel. His whole countenance became vengeful, and he was shaken by sudden fury. He became as I had imagined him from Helen’s account of his dreams.

“Fail?” he said. Said? Shouted, rather. “How should I fail? God’s heaven. Amn’t I willing to do whatever is necessary not to fail? Isn’t it only a case of setting out to do a thing, of getting to the end of any road, like every other damned person does, and did evermore that got there, and was respected when he got? I’m getting soft and easy, that I can plainly see. But we’ll see can’t we mend that now, so we will, in soul. Blast the failure. That’s only weakness. That’s being frightened, so it is. That’s forgetting. It’s forgetting what was evermore true, and evermore

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will be by all that's known. There's an end o' that now anyway."

He strode up and down our room tense with emotion. It was not to me he was speaking. He just spoke. I was forgotten.

He sat down at his desk, toying with a pencil and paper. The paper, when I saw it, was scored with rhythmical signs, punctuated with jabs that had pierced the sheet. Then he rose again, and marched up and down the room in a somewhat quieter mood.

"God, I was nearly caught," I heard him say. "A person has to be damned wary, so he has. Wary, wary, wary all the time. It's queer; but very likely the skin's own nature to the eye. Near caught; but noway caught. We'll see now. By damn, we will."

Those were his words, as he muttered them, though they were a mystery to me.

Then he drew a cigar and lit it. He stood at the window looking out over the roofs and unseemly yards at the back of the house. Ever and again he surveyed the burning edge of his cigar. After a time he turned to me.

"We won't fail, William," he said, and the deep humour of his eyes was mixed with cunning. They laughed at one as a fox's eyes might have done. "We won't fail. You'll see."

The two of us then went over certain business connected with the Stores, and I have never known him so clear-sighted, so instant in his decisions, so quietly perceptive of all that lay implied in each matter that arose in its bearing on the general policy he defined. He was, in fact, quiet and uncommunicative all the rest of that day, and his distress seemed completely to have vanished.

5.

After that Jeremiah spent an unusual amount of time in Patrick Bronty's company. Either he was at the Laboratory, or, stranger yet, he brought

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Bronty to Dame Street, before or after luncheon together.

I saw them chuckling together. Or rather, Patrick Bronty did not chuckle. He only seemed to chuckle, but no chuckle ever happened. The only chuckle was in those eyes of his, that appeared to turn round and round, sometimes flashing a look outward and then turning inward again in rapid succession. Nor, for that matter, did Jeremiah chuckle. He appeared at times hardly able to contain his humour, while completely grave and dignified. It was a humour the greater for being contained, and was only rarely liberated in sharp explosions of laughter.

I am sure the idea first originated in Patrick Bronty's mind. It smelt of him. It was loaded with his calculated mockery of all English institutions. It had the perfectly accurate, the consummately devised, destructive devilment that is the only engine left to us, cruel though it be and wasteful, for the expression of our protest against the chains that bind us.

Within a fortnight the two of them went over together to London. For the first time I was, as it were, put aside. Neither of them shared a confidence with me in this business. It may be I was hurt, even jealous, at my exclusion; but on the other hand it was significant that Jeremiah never once took me into his confidence during the entire course of the case.

Shortly after their return an English weekly journal published a bitter attack on the Veros Company and its products. To say that the article was virulent would be a mild description of it. "Fraud" and "impostors" were words several times employed. At once a writ was issued; and the famous libel action was launched.

In short, the English Law Courts were to be turned into a great advertising platform—as the beginning of a fuller campaign as it happened. The pleadings on both sides were revised, altered and adjusted to one another by Jeremiah himself, assisted by Patrick

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Bronty. I know that, for I have seen them. Two senior counsel, who were also bitterly opposed politicians, were briefed, one on each side. Their instructions left them plenty of room for acrimony. The pleadings were full, and covered everything, from manufacture to sales. The defence was an entire justification, mitigating nothing.

We all went over to the Case, of course. Shaw and Talbot were wells of boiling indignation, and lusted for nothing so much as the witness box. There was no doubting their ardour of battle, of which I felt more than a little ashamed indeed. The Case had been well advertised. A Press agent had been engaged—not by Jeremiah, but by the other side, for Jeremiah was not the man to leave anything to the chance of discovery. We passed up the broad entrance of the Law Courts beside a file of hateful, but necessary, photographers, and had the satisfaction of seeing ourselves the following day displayed in print.

Jeremiah, I could see, was exultant. I knew him too well to be deceived by his grave and austere dignity. It came out very well in the photographs, and, as adornments to his fine presence, made him the central figure in the Court. His sense of humour always served him well in such matters. His frigid bow as he made way for the defending editor (his fellow-conspirator and agent) was of eighteenth-century courtesy. It was astonishing how such chances came to his hand, though it could never be charged that he sought them. I have no doubt that somewhere in his mind an imp was holding both its sides shaking and aching with laughter, and that the severe gravity of his demeanour was not the least cause, or maybe effect, of that mirth. And to be sure, the huge humbug of these pompous proceedings was devilment enough even to suit his freakish humour. Even I could enjoy that devilment, whose mind was frightened with the care of possible discovery.

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Beyond all this, however, I caught something from him of a new exultant confidence. It was a confidence not different in extent, perhaps, but different in kind from that which had already fortified him. He sat at my solicitor's table. I sat behind the junior counsel. But I knew what was being transacted behind that great head and that broad back below me. Consequently I was not surprised at his peculiar deliverance to me that night.

The opening speech of our counsel lasted the whole of that day. It opened with the statement that the case could not be better displayed than by a plain statement of facts. Therefore the facts were displayed, and as they included the ills of modern civilisation, the benefits requiring to be conferred if that civilisation were not to perish for lack of the proper proportions of sustenance needed by the human frame, and the inception of the company for the supply of those benefits, it will be agreed that we started fairly well. Nothing was omitted. How could it be when all the company desired was the fullest investigation? Because such a company, existing in a world where all men—all men, none excepted—sought their legitimate, their strictly legitimate, gain, desired commercial prosperity from the conferring of that benefit—a prosperity derived not from great profits, but rather from the extended scope of its operations—was it not to be protected from the malicious onslaughts of journalists whose business it was to dip their pens in petty malice, seeking thus to sell their worthless sheets?

On that note we concluded for the day. That night Jeremiah came to me after dinner, and we walked through the crowded streets.

"Tell me now," he said. "Wasn't it Finn that bit through the flesh of his thumb to the bone, and through the bone to the marrow, and through the marrow to the nerve, and then when he bit the nerve he was able to foretell the future?"

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“ Old Finn mac Cumhal. That’s right. And you that never read books, you say.” I was delighted at his company. I loved the man. He was surely a very lovable man.

“ I thought I had him right. Didn’t I hear of him before you ever opened the pages of a book about him. Well, do you know, I’ve been biting on my nerve all this mortal day, and it’s in the nerve of the marrow of the bones of my body that my luck’s my friend from this out, and that all’s going to be well to the end now. It seems that every person must have his one great fight. I’ve mine mastered now. Mastered, William. It’s just a case of never letting fear take a hold of you. I told you that. The only thing to be afraid of is fear. It came to meet me at the time set for it to come; set for me to face it; set for me to master it. Supposing now I hadn’t held out. Look what I’d have missed. Was there ever a day like this day? Sure there never was. And to-morrow’ll better it.”

He was very quiet and confident, even a little contemptuous as we spoke together of the case. There was never a reference to the real nature of the case. That was implied, and needed no explanations. It was with Patrick Bronty, later at night, that that side of affairs was discussed, I have no doubt; for the two of them were earnestly engaged till late in deep consultations.

Let each man be given his due. Beyond all question Patrick Bronty was superb the following day. The generalship was clearly Jeremiah’s, but it required just that perfect performance. It all depended on him—not the mere case, which had never been in doubt since the opening speech of counsel, but its reverberative effect as advertisement—and certainly his judgment was as fine as his performance was finished. On its own merits, too, his evidence was deeply interesting, and quite justified the space given to it in later controversy in the Press.

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Jeremiah opened the day, and said little. He still kept the manner he had adopted throughout, grave, austere, old-fashioned of courtesy. He was a man of other industrial interests, not dependent on Veros. He had met Dr. Bronty, at the invitation—yes, the purely social invitation—of a friend, and had been greatly impressed by certain statements of his. It was clear to him that Dr. Bronty was a man whose life had not induced him to consider the practical application of his thinking. He had spoken of the matter to certain friends of his, chief among whom were Sir Anthony Shaw and Lord John Talbot, and the Veros Company was the result. It seemed remarkable to him that such an enterprise, which, if soundly conceived, intended a benefit, should be made the object of this kind of attack. It was not for him to say what might have been the purpose of the attack. No doubt he could have bought off the attack—or bought an apology. Such negotiations would have been contemptible. Their only possible course, he concluded, was the one they had taken; and he turned, gravely bowing to his lordship saying: “Your Lordship’s court was the arena we preferred.”

Sir Anthony followed in elderly satire. Lord John in wirestrung indignation. Then came Bronty.

I feared for him. Had he once let his eyes rove outward the look in them would have turned men away. I could see he was consumed with a cold anger not at all derived from the case involved; but as it happened his pallor seemed only the student’s. He had his path to tread, and he trod it relentlessly, bench and bar notwithstanding. Never once did he refer to Veros. He turned the court into a lecture-hall, where with clipped speech and slender vowelling he discoursed on the effect of modern life on the bodies of men and women. Within half an hour the interest in that court was no more legal, and the best material was being provided for newspaper discussion.

He was not to be taken, he said, as assenting to

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the description of these logical remedies as medicines, patent or otherwise. That might be necessary in commerce. He did not know. That was not his concern. Medicines were remedies, or cures, for ills that had occurred owing in great measure to negligence and ignorance. The subject of his study was not the curing but the preventing of ills. It was therefore not a question of medicine, but of food. There was nothing fantastic in his thinking. The only truly fantastic thing in the world was ignorance, whether in or out of newspapers. Our bodies were composed of the same constituents as the earth, though that might seem a curious remark to make anywhere out of a burial service. Both were being called upon to give up these constituents in the form of energy, according to the nature of that energy. From both particular vitalities were at different times being extracted. Yet how different was the treatment in each case. Earth was being provided with the constituents of those vitalities in the proportion in which they were later taken away in service. Our bodies, however, received none of that purposeful care. The contrary, indeed, was the case, as he could shew.

He did shew; he kept them there the rest of that day, shewing: and I could see a new journalistic theme, centred upon Veros. It was excellently devised; and as excellently completed.

The rest of the case was as satisfactory. Knowing nothing of the arrangements, I was kept in constant wonder. In as constant satisfaction, too.

The facts, however, are publicly known. Our opponents' case rested upon an analyst by the name of Arbuthnot, and under cross-examination he had turned to the support of Patrick Bronty when the jury stopped the case.

It appeared then that things had gone too well, for before the principals knew well what was happening damages of five thousand pounds had been returned.

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Scarcely could I keep my seat, so anxious was I. For our opponent's face as he looked round at Jeremiah, filled me with apprehension. But Jeremiah quickly turned and included the court in a single wide sweep of his arm.

"Live and let live : we want no punitive damages," he said loudly to his counsel. "We want to break nobody, to injure nobody. We want only a sufficient apology, and a wrong righted. We can afford to leave our case in the public hands."

That night our internal troubles began. Shaw, who had been out of court at the closing of the case, described the foregoing of costs as a grave error of judgment. Talbot, who had plucked uselessly at Jeremiah's elbow, thought it all a mere foolery. Jeremiah smoked his cigar, and gave heed to neither of them till they had expended their criticism. Then he spoke.

"Good business isn't so easy to understand after all, it would seem, gentlemen. What one of you calls an error of judgment, and the other of you mere foolery, is simply good business. Foregoing that five thousand will repay it in six months, and increase it steadily afterwards. Nothing will impress people like that. Only the strongest folk do things like that, and only the strongest folk get any attention in this world. Only secure people act in that way, and only secure people are judged worthy of security. That is the rule of the world. Denounce my judgment in six months' time, if you will. To-day's too early."

They were not to know the truth that a court of law had been set at his will as platform for an advertisement cheap at the price. That was a secret between him and Patrick Bronty. I could, at that time, but guess from what I could see, from what I could piece together with the inner knowledge that came to my hand, and from the implications of Jeremiah's conversation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

I.

JEREMIAH had saved more than his company. He had saved himself. What did Shaw, Talbot, and the others matter? They made money, made it with the full of both their arms, where they looked to have lost it. But what was that, beyond the record that such a one changed a shabby coat for a new? Hardly even so impressive. They even made a presentation to Jeremiah of some of their shares. Ridiculous people, unsuspectingly ironic. So might dusky idolators have offered thanksgiving to their god, and the priests of the temple have swept their gifts into his own private pouch. They enabled Jeremiah to pay for the entire case out of their pockets, instead of out of his own, with a further profit in hands. Well might he say that his Luck had become his friend again, when it not only returned to his side, but made such an amend for its hour of absence. All their faces were flushed with pleasure the night they made the presentation. His was inscrutable. That was the difference between them. They had saved their money, and made it fruitful. He had saved and made fruitful something of more moment than his money.

How shall one describe what he had saved, more than truthfully to say that he had saved himself. The salvation was of more than his life, of more than his sanity, of more than his faith. He had saved the cause of these things. He might speak, wildly, of his Luck, but there was something in his foolish phrase at the root of all thought and action . . . as I now began dimly to perceive. There is a

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life within every life, there is a faith at the heart of every faith, that is own brother to a sense of destiny, however that destiny be described and by whatever faculties of the mind or heart it is perceived.

Philosophy is a word we idly use. Folk wrangle as to alternatives, when perhaps all alternatives are only quickly-changing aspects of something greater than them all, and all alike true or untrue according to the depth of one's feelings in life. Therefore one hesitates to speak of philosophy. Had one said to Jeremiah that he was defending a philosophy of life . . . well, it is enough to say my courage never went so far as to venture the suggestion. It might have been worth it, if only to see the expression on his face; but it would have had no other worth, and the keeping of his good opinion was better value. Yet in a very deep sense the remark would have been true.

In another sense it would have been untrue to have said any such thing. Even grossly untrue. To reduce to intellectual form one's living touch with reality is a misuse of the intellect. When Jeremiah came up to me among my books he caused them to stand on the shelves like misbegotten freaks of the mind. In truth he did more. He waved them away, till they were wrapt in vague and curling mists. He plunged one into the flow of life. They withdrew one from that flow.

Yet he also had his philosophy. It was a very clear philosophy. It was a working philosophy. It was drawn from observation, and wrought from more experience than he remembered, cared to remember, or was permitted by his brain to remember. Perhaps the deeper part of it was drawn from the experience he was not permitted to remember. And perhaps it is the same with all of us.

This had been assailed, had even been threatened

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with destruction, and he had fought with all his might to save it. It was not his money he had fought to save. Though that was involved, it was only in the outskirts of the fight. Money was only a badge carried as a symbol on the lance he lifted. The sun, the moon and the stars, and all the worth of the world, might equally have been emblazoned on his shield for other symbols. He even fought for more than his foothold, though that was more nearly involved. In the deepest sense, he fought for his philosophy. In the deepest and no merely selfish sense, he fought for himself, and for the security and unity of himself. And he won, and was free to go forward again.

Never could I forget the terrible things Helen Hare had told me that night. I shudder to think what would have happened had he not won.

2.

Yet such thoughts seemed as unreal now as the strain and wreckage of a night's storm seems unreal in a pet-day by the sea in Connemara, when all the fury is suddenly caught in breathless beauty. The fishermen that lazily sort their tackle in the sun were not more unlike the wild men that lashed the thatch overnight than Jeremiah now was unlike the spirit that looked out at me through a haggard face the afternoon that still lived in my memory.

Not that he was exuberant. Nor was he in high humour. It was not thus success affected him. It might have done had success simply been his goal. But success was the normal for which he played, and therefore he was cool, collected, and thoughtful for the future. He had won his normal, and he was normal himself.

For some time careful thought was required. It was required, for instance, in the settlement of the case just concluded. Bronty went several times to London, and I have no doubt of the business that

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took him there. Especially was it required in harrowing and sowing the land that had been ploughed so well. This needed thought, and it needed money, and our credit had already been overtaxed. This in its turn required order and organisation.

Jeremiah lived for such times. "Do you know," he said one of these days, "it's only a natural ass or an unnatural slave that gets pleasure simply out of working. A decent person would be better employed cock-shying at bottles on the edge of a wall. But to be giving shape to things, and to be getting things done and finished, and at the heel of the day to know that you're after making things solid and whole that weren't solid and whole when you set out, that's not work at all, it's just fun. Fun as large as the sky, William, that's what it is. What way would I be tired?" This was said at the end of a heavy day, when we set out late for home; and he stretched his arms above his head with a shout that echoed through the silent building.

That shout was his joyous war-cry. It was heard again now, and often. Oftener than before, in truth, for he grew larger and more capacious for joy as he grew older. Veros was thriving. Within a year of the case he had extended the works in Liverpool, and was making careful preparations for public flotation. He projected a visit to America, in order to organise the business there personally. And he was in negotiation for another Stores on the South side of the city, to run against Delaney's.

I had suggested that he should change the name of this to Delaney's, in order to make the utmost of the name. "Don't you know," he replied, "that rivers are things you must never defy, especially if they run east and west? I don't know was there ever a city that had a river running east and west, but the folk on the north side were folk on the north side, and the folk on the south side were folk on the south side, that never did aught but scowl across

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the river at one another. It's so in the city anyway, and we'll give them each their Store to set against the other, and we making money from both alike. That's the better way. Often there's sense where there's humour."

His capacity for work was enormous, especially when, as now, everything went well. It is no doubt easy to have a sure touch when there is an instant and successful response to it; but on the other hand he had fought, and fought desperately, to win his success, and had never flinched while packing his stakes when disaster seemed the most likely end. Within a couple of years he left for America, not only to organise the business there, but to do more. For it had been decided to float the Veros Company simultaneously in London and in America, and that now engaged his whole attention.

"Sure," he said, "it's everything. The English law's the most beautiful thing ever invented. I must study the American law on the spot. We're sellers and buyers both at the one time, don't you see? Nobody thinks of that, but those that are both selling and buying. We've got to buy our own concern as cheaply as we can and sell as dearly as we can. Sounds as if it couldn't be done, but bring a third man into the business and it becomes possible at once. The third man's the man to study, for he pays the difference, don't you see? The man that invented that scheme was no fool, let me tell you. I amn't quite sure how it works in America, though; and these are things that have to be thought out. They're better worth study than your books, for there's the respect of the world for those who study them carefully."

I rallied him. "But isn't it the world that pays that difference?"

"Sure. Good reason for it to respect."

"And equity? What about equity?"

He became caustic then. He ever became caustic

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at such a challenge. His laughter went, and he became hard, unlike himself indeed.

"What's that?" he asked. "I never saw it, or touched it. What is it, or what was it ever? Anyway, haven't we clergymen and others to look after that sort of thing? Do you ever hear them complain? I never did, and perhaps there were times when the complaint might have done me a bit of solid good. The devil of good . . . Facts, William, facts. I'm not talking about things I never saw nor smelt, but of facts I've learnt. . . . As long as they're content, and every other body's content, so am I. We've just got to be hard; for we're not putting money into things we don't know, but into things we do know. When the world changes, I'll change. But God help the man that starts the change. They'll crucify him, and everybody'll take a hand."

That night as we went home he gave a newsboy a half-crown for his evening paper. Such were the vagaries of the man. The remarkable thing was that the lad had two boots on. It was one of his oddities never to miss a half-crown to a boy with one boot and one bare foot. The coin was given then as if by reaction, for I am sure he often did not know of the gift, as I am sure he never reasoned in the giving. The sight of the eye, and the motion of the hand, were like the eyelid's flutter before a threatened blow. But on this occasion the lad wore his two shoes; and that lifted the act out of the ordinary.

3.

He was away in America for some months, and I was lonely without him. Helen, too was lonely, for, however busy he might have been, their equal comradeship was never stirred. And this was the first time in their twelve years of married life when they had been apart for more than a few days. At

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the end of the busiest day, when he turned homeward, he came as the mariner in a ballad looking for the steady unfluttering light that shone in her mind. Least sentimental of all men, as she was the least sentimental of women, his storm and her clear light might very easily have been made the subjects of a ballad that dripped sentiment from every line. It would have amused both of them; and they would have survived it without hurt; but the theme was there. We Irish, fortunately, whatever our vices, have so little of sentimentality in us that we can keep clear of sentiment the themes that elsewhere slip so easily into its puddles, and can, when we will, make of married life a comradeship hard and kind and humorous. We can be cruel. Perhaps there is much in us naturally cruel. But it is the cruelty of direct intention. It is not the cruelty, the last evil in cruelty, of sentiment. Our quick sense of the ridiculous saves us there. Therefore we can (should one add, when we will?) save the essence of good things, and keep our love with humour. These two did; and Helen Hare was lonely as only a woman can be lonely when her good comrade is away.

She had her own troubles. Martin was now a boy of eleven. The younger lad (whom I seldom named, for fear of taking sides) was six. They were both curious boys—if indeed there were ever boys that were not curious. Their ages did not companion them, but neither did their temperaments. Age and temperament combined to thrust them apart, and to thrust with so sharp a spike as to wound. Martin was voluble; the other was invincibly silent; but the silence had greater conviction of purpose than the volubility. Martin had reached the age of rapid growth, and was lank as a weed in June. On the other hand, Diarmuid was short for his years, and sturdy and slow of movement. Martin's mind moved swiftly from subject to subject, without

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apparent purpose, like a swallow about household eaves. Diarmuid's lifted itself from the waters of reflection like a heron, slow-moving because of the greater expanse of its wings, but rapid in the air when a-wing, and making more distance in the end, because it flew, not to glance, but to find an end to its journey.

The result of the play of mind between the two boys was strange. It was not easy to follow. Often Martin grew restive under the little lad's long attentive regard. No wonder, for there was often the implied astonishment of contempt in it. The pursed lips, the round dark-blue eyes like bottomless waters, and the furrowed forehead, became parts of a little criticism in mortal flesh. And Martin had no natural defence against that criticism, but one. To that one he turned; and petty furtive bullying in dark corners called constantly for Helen's separating hand.

That Diarmuid was to be perfect son of his father was clear even at that age. Martin was harder to understand, for those interested in such things. Once when he was at his homework, and Helen was helping him with his arithmetic, he cried out in shrill excitement: "There, mum, don't you see; these two cancel-out." I looked quickly across at him stretched over his book under his mother's encircling arm. Was that, then, the answer? Had his parents cancelled-out in him? And was this at all a constant rule in the arithmetic of families?

He was winning enough indeed. I enjoyed our walks of a Saturday afternoon along the Dodder. He was now my companion as I had been his father's—when he was not better occupied among his school-friends. He had a quick adaptable mind, and no small amount of practical sense. He never conveyed the impression that one had trespassed on his time, or that he would rather be with friends of his own age; and that is a sure road to the esteem

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of elders, who think well of children only as flattering mirrors of themselves. I had actually to check myself discoursing to him; I had to catechise myself before I asked him if he would walk with me—so easy did he make an elder's foolishness. No doubt, he would have put aside an agreement with his friends rather than refuse; and would do it without resentment, if sometimes a little shyly too.

In these ways Martin was likeable and winning. But he never left one thoughtful, as Diarmuid did. One turned from Martin to a book, and with the first sentence he was forgotten. Not so the little lad. He intervened between one and the sentence perplexingly. Silent? His silence was often more disturbing than another's clamour, so solid, so intent was it. He was at once shy and disconcertingly decisive. He was one or the other according to the mood of the mood; and sometimes I thought that both were the one thing, and only appeared different according to the light that fell on them from without.

Diarmuid was even like his father in his attitude toward his mother. Martin was affectionate and clinging, particularly in times of trouble. Diarmuid was detached and independent, even at that age. Yet I could have wagered, even then, that Helen would find in Diarmuid a stouter rock of defence in him than in the other. It was amusing sometimes to see that detachment. It was so stubborn, so self-contained and wilful. He shook himself free from easy affection, with blue, rebellious, wrathful eyes. Whatever he gave he gave of himself, not as a mere return of another's affection.

It seemed to me, as I watched them, that Martin was just waiting for Life to make something of him, while this little parcel of determination was waiting to make something of Life. And in that he reminded me of his father too.

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4.

It was not surprising that Helen Hare should have found this younger son of hers more interesting than the other. But she held the scales evenly between the two. She had not even need to weigh her scales in the advantage of the physically weaker, for Diarmuid resented her protection, and Martin was more in fear of his younger brother than the younger brother was of him. Whatever the physical strength, it was well balanced by something harder to define. It was this, in fact, that turned Martin into a bully, and a furtive bully at that.

One evening, while Jeremiah was away, as Helen and I sat conversing after dinner, we heard a cry of pain and sounds of a scuffle outside in the hall. Helen went out quickly at once, and returned holding Martin with the one hand and Diarmuid with the other. Martin looked guilty; Diarmuid black and wrathful. They were both flushed.

"What do you think of that, William?" Helen said. "A big boy like Martin twisting his little brother's arm behind his back. Is that what you learn at school, tell me? Sit down there, Jerry. Now, Martin, isn't it a grand and splendid thing to pick a boy half your size to bully in that way? And what sort of bullying is that? Do you know you might have hurt his arms for his lifetime? What did you do it for?"

Martin stood before her with hanging head. Diarmuid sat at the other side of the table, with furrowed brow, looking intently across at him, as if trying to read his soul. Not a word had Martin to say.

"What did he do to you?" his mother repeated.

"Didn't do anything. He was cheeky."

"What do you mean?"

Martin looked up in his indignation. "What the nation does he mean looking at me always like that?"

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Look at him now, will you? I'm not an old circus. He's got to be dressed, little or no. We don't stand that kind of thing at school from beastly kids. It's for his good."

The little person pointed out in this way slipped down off his chair and walked firmly across the room with his fists clenched. There was nothing of wrath about him now. Nothing but a settled determination. The wrath was dispersed, and nothing remained but the execution of his Will. He marched over to Martin, and, before Helen could intervene, he had struck him several times in the part of the body most accessible to him. As this part happened to be the stomach there was some justification for the bellow with which Martin greeted us. Yet the astonishing thing was that none of us made any move to intervene till the first blow was struck. Not even Martin. It was as if that first blow broke the queer fascination in which we had been held. And when it was all over, it was Martin, not Diarmuid, who seemed most to need our sympathy.

"There's nothing more about it," Helen said, when they had both gone off to bed. "Jeremiah may say what he likes, but directly he returns Jerry goes to school. That's settled. Jeremiah may have learnt a good deal out of school, but that's no case for our defying custom. Isn't custom the wisdom of experience? There's the making of a strange man in Jerry, and that's all the more reason why he should be put early to discipline and company, instead of his being with his mother all hours."

5.

On his return, however, Jeremiah was even more obstinately opposed to putting the lad to school. No doubt, seeing the scenes of his early experience, contrasted as they were with his present success, was partly accountable for his mood. He was in the greatest good humour, and happily thrilled at the

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touch of familiar things. Like many men whose adventures are internal, he loved the familiar touch and the familiar sight. And he was vexed at the introduction of this unfamiliar subject.

I was drawn into the discussion. He brought me down, to make two opponents instead of one.

"Two of you?" he said. "Good, then. The more the better. But will either of you tell me what's all the hurry about?"

"In the first place, Jeremiah," she said, "he's nearly seven . . ."

"If it was you that wished him to stay, my dear, it'd be just after six."

"Whether I would or not, he's just on seven. Time didn't stand still because you were in America, do you know. And a boy of seven ought to have been at school for three years, and would have been but for you. Now he's going."

"Ne'er a thing ever I learnt at school was much use to me since. Schools are inventions to roll out natural and proper differences, till one person's as like another as two peas. Will you tell me how any person is to use his eyes if you take him young and tell him what he's to see? I want Diarmuid to see for himself, not to be told what to see. He'll have that advantage over everyone then. I want him to be a man, not a pattern as every other person is. Look at Martin. Already they've made one of my sons—and one of your sons, my dear—a pattern. And you want them to start on the other."

"You don't suggest, Jeremiah," I interposed, "that he should never have his school."

Jeremiah looked inscrutably at me, and replied quietly.

"Had I the time, I'd like to be his teacher. But boys will never learn from their fathers. No, he must go to school. He'll learn all that he wants in seven years, and I want him to have his own mind before he begins."

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The discussion went to and fro, till Patrick Brontë arrived. Now that Jeremiah was back, he had begun to call again.

"Come in, Brontë. Sit down. You're just in time to help us out with a difficulty. I'm just saying . . ."

Jeremiah went through the matter again, with Helen interposing now and then to right her case.

Brontë sat hearing all but heeding nothing. I watched him with interest. I was curious to hear what he would say. Helen, too, seemed interested in him. She looked at him with watchful eyes full of humour.

"Now," Jeremiah said, "you've heard the case to everyone's agreement. What's your mind on it?"

Patrick Brontë flashed a glance—if an amazingly quick, searching movement of his eyes may so be described—at him, and then his eyes became as expressionless as the thin, rather haggard mask he bore through life in place of normal features. A meagre smile played upon his lips in the moment or two of silence before he spoke. His voice sounded as usual as if it came, flat and fluted, from some distant place behind that mask.

"It's strange now," he said, "the way these things strike a new mind. Men even more than women practise in themselves the identical things they denounce in others. An abstract mind isn't easy to achieve indeed, but 'tis sure that they have it least who assume it most. It cannot but be so, for assertion's like cynicism. It's fear; it's a deliberate hardening against criticism. Be sure there never was a mind so shut as the mind of the man who said he always kept it open. And why? Easy to see. It's because he knows it's shut that he walks abroad to tell his neighbours that there's nothing in the world like an open mind. They'd find him out else. If he talks long enough and firmly enough they'll never find him out."

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He stopped, flashed another glance at Jeremiah, then spoke again.

"Do you want to keep the boy from schoolmasters to give him a chance of his own mind, or do you want to keep him at home to give him yours?"

Jeremiah did not wince, neither did he smile. All he said was:

"Go on. I'm listening to you."

"I don't say, mind you. I'm only enquiring. In my own mind I'm enquiring. A boy'll see through a schoolmaster quicker than he'll see through his father, and a deal quicker than he'll see through his mother. I'm all in favour of school early for that reason. But did you ever hear tell of Aeneas O'Maille?"

"We're all heeding you. Go right on to the end."

"I was teaching with him before we met, you may mind. He has the whole thing worked out. Says he, education is a child's right to find out for itself . . . to experiment and take its own way through subjects that we in our experience judge the world requires. It's a meeting-place of old and young. He'd have all schools turned into laboratories. He'd have every classroom a laboratory. There's nothing new in that; but it's new that he practises it. His boys—he hasn't many, 'tis true—practise literature. They talk Latin and Irish . . ."

"Irish?" It was Helen who interrupted. She spoke sharply and in surprise.

Patrick Bronty turned toward her with fine courtesy. His very dignity was a reproof, one must admit.

"It does happen to be our own language, whatever we did to deserve it. It happens also to compel an accurate way of thinking, and so is a clear educational medium."

"Diarmuid O'Hara should speak Irish," said Jeremiah. I am sure we all turned toward him, for

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he spoke in so strange a tone. It was as though somebody else in him uttered a foregone conclusion. It would have been interesting to know what memories were awake in him—or even if any memories at all were consciously awake in him—as he looked from his cigar to scan Bronty's mask.

Helen looked smilingly from him as she turned to Bronty with a courtesy that matched his own.

"I didn't mean that, of course. But do you mean a political school?"

Patrick Bronty smiled at her. His smile was like sunshine struggling through a mist, wan but grateful, pathetically beautiful, too.

"In the sense in which you mean it, there's not a school in all Ireland that's not political. That's part of our present fate. The schools that are the most ostentatiously non-political are the most political, of course. That simply follows. But Aeneas is a man. He's not a medicine. It's just his wish not to be a medicine, but to leave boys to practise for themselves, to find, masticate and digest their own food. I didn't know Virgil was a poet till I went there a grown man. I had always thought he was a penal code. 'Twas the boys taught me different, so they did."

"And that's the place you recommend?" Jeremiah asked.

"I wasn't asked to recommend, or I wouldn't have spoken. You were saying you wanted the boy to have his own mind by keeping him from school. It occurred to me that all schools weren't the same. And it occurred to me he'd a right to his own mind from his . . . from you as well as from masters. You don't like books, 'tis clear. But supposing he might?"

"Books are stale experience. What I got I got straight from the facts."

"That's no reason why you should be the die for his wax."

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"Better let him go straight to the facts."

"I thought that's what I was saying."

Jeremiah looked at him with eyes deep with humour. Then he laughed.

"You're a queer man, Patrick Bronty," he said.

"And the best is you're often right. There's no gainsaying that. We'll search out this friend of yours. Helen will pay him a surprise visit, and judge for herself. That he had you for master one time wasn't too bad a choice for him, do you know."

And so it was that Patrick Bronty brought Aeneas O'Maille into our life, that life over which Jeremiah presided with Helen for comrade. For it was her choice that sent Diarmuid there to school, so well pleased was she with her visit; and, the next term, sent Martin after him.

CHAPTER EIGHT

I.

PATRICK BRONTÛ'S remarks left me thinking. Not often men see themselves truly. Here was Jeremiah wishing his sons to see life for themselves, with their eyes unconfused apparently by the experience of others, and all the time he was working to shield them from the experience by which he had won his own philosophy. It was a curious result.

Was he not by necessity the hazard of his own adventure? A thousand things he might have been, but was not, because thus and thus his days had fallen together. He was various enough in the out-turn, none will deny. If he was direct, he was adaptable. But he was wide enough for many other possibilities. In fact, he was all those other possibilities, for they resided in him, and often displayed themselves. Yet they were the lesser parts of him; if not the lesser parts they surely were the less manifest parts of him; for his life had called out one of many possibilities and made it so much greater than the others that it had become his distinctive self. And yet, while he required that his sons should fare as independently, he laboured to prevent them. Strange irony.

For it was quite clear that he did so labour, and that it was part of his conscious thought. Whatever Diarmuid O'Hara might have become, but for the intervention of Marcus Blake, Solicitor, it is impossible to say. It were without profit to enquire, however curious that enquiry might be, for Jeremiah Hare became something quite different, as it

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was no doubt destined that he should. That shrewd, searching mind that I had seemed to see in Father Laverty's tales had now become the successful figure we all knew. Its course had been taken, and the result sealed in the success he had apparently determined to win, and for which all men respected him as they should. But now that there was—by his will, too, for further irony—another Diarmuid O'Hara on the scene to play his part a little hour, I had to hear the confidence of the old, in his other guise, protecting the new from the experience that had determined him.

Never did he see—not in relation to himself certainly—that by the same act he was liberating both his sons for other things. It was not to be expected that he should see that he was perhaps liberating them for some of his own possibilities, had life taken him otherwise. Yet, that was a thought often in my mind as a result of his own conversation. Started on a train of thought by Patrick Brontë's words, Jeremiah stirred it into life again and again during the weeks that followed.

2.

For on his return from America the company was floated, and though there was some criticism that the conditions were fully fortunate to the vendors of the old company, the capital was over-subscribed. Simultaneously an American company was floated, with equal success. Jeremiah was not greatly concerned about either; and well he need not have been, for since the famous case the only limit to development had been the limit of capital. Yet no sooner were the lists closed than his mind turned to the public flotation of Delaney's with a view to a further extension of premises.

"The boys are safe now," he said. "I've reached the point now when money will make its own money. It's the only trouble getting to that point.

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A person has to shut his eye to every other thing till he gets there, but he can search out his charities after."

"I wonder, Jeremiah," I ventured, "are you as just to yourself as you are frank with me."

He sat with his chair wheeled about toward my desk, and the light from the window fell like a white sheet about him. His strong brows were drawn down over his eyes, it may be partly because of the glare that struggled through the clouds. His ruddy complexion was paled a little by that light, that caught the surface of his eyes, masking their depth.

"Do you know," he said, "I have been waiting for you to say that to me for some years. And now you've said it, I am n't disposed to turn my side to you. I've said many a thing to you I wouldn't have said to another, because by talking with you I've kept right with myself. But I meant all I said. Every word. Sure. I made up my mind long ago that the most of folk say one thing but take good care to do another. Early I found that out, earlier than you'd believe. They praise one thing by all they do, but another by all they say. When I had that lesson well learnt, I said I wouldn't be the fool of their words. I said more. I said I wouldn't be the fool of myself. Do you know, I've often wondered if I'd have kept my bargain if it wasn't for you. I wouldn't have you from me for a great deal. That's so, William. There's nothing I have that's not as much yours."

"My dear Jeremiah," I said, deeply stirred by the unexpected emotion of his words, "any service I ever gave you have more than repaid now. But you don't mean . . . how can I say it? I mean what you said about charity. Do you really suggest that it's only the hostage of success?"

"By gad, I don't know what else it is! You don't suppose a gosser running the city with one

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foot in the muck and the other in an old shoe ever saw anything else in it. You may take it he didn't, and comfort your mind with that. A deal of decency he ever discovered in charity, even at the Christmas. And well for him he didn't, or there'd be blood spilt by the same token. No, no. It's all part of the painted cloth. There's comradeship, but there isn't charity."

"Then why pay the hostages?" I asked. I could have said more, for there was real anguish in my mind.

"Ay," he laughed, "there's cunning in that. You get to the moment when you can't move ahead without paying what you call your hostages. Then pay, and pay well. Don't be afraid of that either, for many make that mistake. You can buy a good name, as you buy most public things, and it's a great help. . . . It's better than law-suits, man," he added slyly. "Besides, there are the boys. They're safe now; but that's not all they'll want. It's all very foolish, do you know; but I amn't complaining of facts. I gave up that foolishness long ago; for there never was such foolishness as to complain of foolishness. Foolishness is a fact too, and a damned useful fact. Now I've got to turn it to help my boys. Being a father's a fact too, don't you see?"

I tempted him deliberately. "So now you propose settling down. Is that it?"

"What?" He jumped to his feet, towering over me. "Do I look like it? It's not to settle down because I'm past the point when I could have lost if I'd let fear once take a hold of me. We're going right on to the end, William, brave as you please . . . though perhaps the best is past. There's many a new adventure yet, and will be till I make my soul, which isn't for a long while yet. Then there are my boys. They're not sentiments, do you know. They are facts, too. Especially Diarmuid O'Hara. He's a tough fact, if I don't mistake."

"Isn't it strange, Jeremiah, how we all wish to

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persist, not only in ourselves, but in our children? I wonder how far we're wise at all. No doubt I'm but a bachelor, and so am apt to wonder all the more. Yet I do wonder."

"Let you not make any mistake about that. Aren't our children blood out of our blood? Even Martin. He's quick as you please, and learnable. It won't be many years till he'll step into this office; and though I won't say he'd have made it what you see, he'll develop it without a mistake, if I'm any judge at all. The other fellow would have made it. He'll be the development and courage of the combination."

"Really I wonder most about Diarmuid. He's so fortressed you could never be sure of him."

"Diarmuid O'Hara? . . ."

3.

These words were spoken when Diarmuid had been about a year at school; and though Jeremiah spoke so confidently of him, and of the part he had planned for him, yet one could not as yet see anything to inspire that confidence. Whatever about his course at school, which was neither more nor less than the course of most boys at the beginning of their schooldays, at home he was still silent and stubborn. It was clear to see that he was passionately attached to his mother; but he resented tenderness from her as if it were an affront. In him this was none of the ordinary boy's idea of manliness. It was something much more private and peculiar. It was not shyness; neither was it boastful; it was simply the other half of his passion.

Difficult though it were at all times to follow (for his soul was a fortress, close-guarded and silent), his attitude toward his mother was intelligible. With her fine tact, Helen knew exactly how to take him. One felt that his resentment distressed her just a little, but she accepted it with a firmness that put him at his ease. With Jeremiah, he was not so

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easy to understand. Nor was Jeremiah himself easy to understand. Already that relation had been established between the two that sometimes seemed as if the two of them were walking round one another like two swordsmen, each in doubt of the other's blade. Jeremiah might, with me, speak of the lad with all a father's affection, and more than a father's admiration; but with Diarmuid he was stiff, and even awkward. The same was true of the boy. At times I saw his eyes follow his father with undisguised admiration; but directly Jeremiah turned toward him, or spoke to him, at once he became watchful, scrutinising him with piercing eyes. They were silent with one another. I am convinced that they completely understood one another; yet Helen was spokesman between the two.

One wondered, awhile, if Jeremiah's title for the boy, always as Diarmuid O'Hara, had anything to do with this. To Diarmuid it must have seemed an odd form of address. What exactly did it evoke in that hidden mind? Did it awake any conscious wonder? Or did it simply set the bells of emotion ringing without perplexity?

4.

Here, at least, is the certain effect it did create. For when the boy first went to school his master introduced him to his fellows as young Jeremiah Hare. He took him out to the school-ground to do so, with his arm affectionately about his shoulder. That, one may imagine, Diarmuid would not mind. His master was nothing to him, and so could be affectionate without offence. But when the name was spoken, he stepped clear at once, and, looking up, ran his determined challenge down before them all:

"My father calls me Diarmuid O'Hara."

"Good for him," laughed Jeremiah when the tale was told. "Amn't I telling you the sort he is,

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that lad? He has chosen for himself now," he added, turning in triumph to Helen.

Helen barely smiled at him, but her eyes were alight with humour as she turned to O'Maille.

"What did you say?" she asked.

"What could I say?" he replied in his grave and happy way. "Only to say that I was sorry for the mistake. It was a splendid incident. You see, it gave the other boys a joke against me, and it's always good for boys to have a joke against their masters. It makes them good-humoured towards us. It makes them affectionate towards us; for we're always affectionate towards those at whose expense we can have a little laugh. As long as it isn't too big a laugh. It was splendid. Me, too, who always try to get them to go by their national names. I was finely rebuked before them all, and they won't forget it, you bet."

"And what did the other boys say?" Helen continued. "How does he get on with the other boys? Is it too early to say?"

"He started well. Diarmuid O'Hara's a war-cry round the place to-day, and will be for a few days to come. Some of them made the mistake of talking to him in Irish. Though he looked at them in wonderment I could see he resented it. He's the sort of boy that takes a little time settling down, but when he settles, faith, there's ne'er a doubt about it. There's something powerful about him. Boys, Mrs. Hare, are the wonder of God's world. They're the mountains and the sea. They're the lakes of reflection and the winds of unrest. You cannot think for the noise they make, and they stir the deepest of thought. Flowers, they are, set near the dirtiest clay. Angels and devils both, and at the same time. Angels as clear as the dawn, and devils as deep, and faith as wholesome, as night. Let me tell you indeed now, that the boy that'll grow up to be a grubbing merchant, with all respect

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to you, sir, as a boy will be fit to sing the purest of poetry as a well will pour out water. You'd think that hazels and running water were their natural abode, till they bring out some dark thing from their unsuspected souls. Teach them some oratory from the greater sort of men, and you'll hear them in the playground talking to one another like princes, or orating like philosophers, but funning all the time. You'd like to be a giant, and put your arms round the whole of them, except that you'd never survive their astonishment, so you wouldn't. And yet each of them is as unlike any other as the flowers of frost."

He spoke as a boy himself in his enthusiasm. In truth there was much of the boy about the very appearance of Aeneas O'Maille; and one could not but remark it as he sat looking contentedly upon us. He was a man of middle height; and presumably of middle years, though that was harder to say. He might have been in the twenties; he might have been in the forties; and therefore one assumed that he was in the thirties. With men of his square-set face, clear complexion and ruddy clustering hair, it is ever difficult to find an age. His eyes, bright as the blue of a sun-lit sky, were certainly the eyes of a boy, though a boy come to responsibility as the furrows about them clearly showed. Much of a man's character is to be discovered in his hands; and this man's hands were capable and strong, like the hands of a mariner refined and gentled by care, by mind and manner. Invisibly he was sun-lit; but visibly, too, the sun seemed yet to shine on him.

5.

No wonder we were always glad when he visited us. He was a pleasant man. He came bringing a happiness with him wide as earth and secure as inland peace. Jeremiah put aside business and warmed himself as in a summer meadow. The steady light of Helen's eyes softened when she saw

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him. Yet he was supremely indifferent to these effects of his presence, apparently. He came and went like the sun. Flowers were not the intention of his being, but the chance of his passing. For he was a strangely pre-occupied man.

Sometimes he came with Patrick Bronty. The friendship of these two men was curious to see. It must have been rooted in an understanding deeper than words, for they were not communicative with one another; and, at first sight, there did not appear to be much common soil between them. Both had abstract kinds of mind. But while Bronty's abstraction (so far as I could judge) was the result of a mind clear and hard, O'Maille's rose from an equal love for all men, chiefly for all boys, not merely whatever their differences, but mainly because of those differences. He did not, for example, choose between Martin and Diarmuid. He chose both Martin and Diarmuid: Martin because he was Martin and Diarmuid because he was Diarmuid. With any other that equality could not but have been indifference. With him it was nothing of the sort.

If, as the years passed, Diarmuid turned more to his master than his brother, that was his preference, not the master's. But the boy turned also to Patrick Bronty, and that was most astonishing. In every sort of a way it was astonishing. If there was any affection in the attachment, one never saw it reveal itself. They had for one another the studied indifference of two men. Aeneas O'Maille passed between them with the indifference of sunshine falling alike on herb and tree. One could not see that either of the two men obtruded themselves on the boy, but they gravely accepted his presence without distinction, even without distinction as to age. And possibly that was why that little strangely determined parcel of humanity turned to these two men as he did.

With his mother he was the same, though more restlessly so. Only with his father did he seem to

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be an utter stranger. He avoided his father, as one might avoid a pending wave. Times were when I could have clouted his ears, so keenly did I feel for Jeremiah. It was causeless and unjust, and, though Jeremiah was never hasty with him and never shewed the smart he must often have felt, I am sure he noticed it. Helen, too, noticed it, and her hand was ever thrown out to avert the occasion of it—or if not to avert the occasion, since there was never clear occasion, at least to diminish the effect. Then Jeremiah would laugh, and protect the boy from his mother's rebuke.

"Ah, let him alone," he said once on such an occasion. "He wants to take his own road, and why shouldn't he? You'll only put him astray altogether trying to force him. He's making up his own mind about things, and he'll do that whatever we say. Don't I know well? Let him alone. It's better for him to use his own eyes, for, do you know, it's a good thing he has a will to do so. Never doubt but he'll find the right road."

So he said to Helen, and he would not permit Helen to restrict him in the making of friendship when she desired to check him for precocity with his elders. Yet he said nothing to Diarmuid, though I could see that he was touched by the thankful and admiring warmth of the glance he received. Puzzle as I would, I could not make out the attitude of this strange son to a father so great. He was so like his father, too. He was for all the world as I conceived his father to have been at his age. Just so grim, just so determined. Yet with his father he was silent, while he turned to so likely a friend as his master and to so unlikely a friend as Patrick Bronty. One would believe that like turns to like; but here was a likeness that became repellent and an unlikeness that attracted. Surely Diarmuid O'Hara—aye, both these Diarmuid O'Haras—upturned one's natural acceptance . . .

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even in their understanding of one another, if, as it appeared, they did so understand.

6.

Aeneas O'Maille was best qualified to understand the boy, simply because of his grave and happy acceptance of him. To him Helen turned in her dissatisfaction with his progress at school. Martin was a quick and ready scholar. No student he, yet learning caused him no effort. Of an evening, at his home-work, his books were soon cast aside; and his reports proved that he did not scamp the work. But Diarmuid shewed no progress. He advanced automatically from class to class, rather because of his age than because of any other sign of proficiency. And his obstinacy and rebelliousness made him a difficult person to hold to his home-work. Under the influence of affection either from his mother or from his master, he would occasionally work with passion; but then he would rebel again, and fall to brooding silence, or steal out to search for some of his school-friends.

So Helen, in spite of Jeremiah, sent for his master. Patrick Bronty came with him from some meeting or other that they had both attended.

O'Maille was not disturbed, however. His faith, no doubt, was not easily shaken.

"He's all right," he said. "He has a good clear brain—faith, a better brain, if I don't mistake, than many an easy scholar. He's too impatient for books. That's the main trouble with him."

"Don't I know that well?" Jeremiah broke in unexpectedly. The hearty approbation burst about us refreshingly, from behind the tobacco smoke that arose from his cigar in a slender column.

"Well now, I wouldn't be surprised if you did," said O'Maille with slow humour; and Jeremiah laughed.

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"Diarmuid is a great little character," Patrick Bronty said, joining in the laughter rather grimly.

"Character; that's just it, faith," continued O'Maille. "He has character. Oh, I don't mean goodness and badness in character. Those great divisions don't so easily apply in some cases. But just character. He is naturally searching and experimental. He's the sort that Padraic beyond would like to have for his lab., except that he's not scientific. Would you believe he has great weight with the other boys? How old is this he is?"

"Ten now," said Helen. "He's very small for his age."

"And very determined. Martin's a favourite in the school, but he hasn't the weight that Diarmuid has. Great weight and great influence he has. I have great respect for a school's judgment of a boy. Not any boy's judgment of any boy, I needn't tell you; but a whole school's judgment of one of their comrades is a hard thing to go beyond. I didn't often find it far from the mark."

"But I want him to be learned. I don't like seeing these reports of his that show him among boys younger than he." Helen's words were petulant; and indeed she had cause for complaint; but her manner was humorous of herself.

"That's where herself and I disagree," Jeremiah said. "I want him to be the very kind you're describing. Do you know, every woman wants her boys to be like every other, only more so. And will you once get thinking of books. Books, glory be. A man once saw something for himself, and he wrote a book about it. That book wasn't the thing he saw by a mighty long measure, you may be sure; just because he thought more of himself writing it than of the thing he saw. Sure it couldn't be. But follow it out. Some other bright lad read that book, and he wrote another. Likely enough, a number of bright lads wrote books. And then the world was

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started on the business. Books came out on the top of books. Books were the children and the fathers of books. The leaf of one book became the whole of another book. Books were written to contradict books. Men here wrote books because other men there wrote books. Men started to search out matter for the writing of books, and of course it was to books they went. Trust them. Devil a thing else they'd do. Serpents growing out from the tails of serpents. Anything would do so long as a book got written on the head of it. Great fellows rose up looking wise, and silly people gave them respect; and why? Because they wrote books saying that other people had written books; what they had written in those books; when they were born; what woman they married; and when they died. Sure. Instead of kicking them out to hell. That's where books have brought us. That's the last old serpent that grew out of the tail of another. Books, books, books. The world is moidhered with books. Books ever, books under, and books through-other, up and down, front and back. And in the meantime everyone forgot the poor old man that wrote the first book and the thing he saw for himself. They forgot a person could see for himself. Never tell me folk have eyes. Books they have instead of eyes, books instead of noses, books instead of hands and feet nearly. They haven't a thought they got from facts. Only from books. They're all dreaming dreams they got from books. Shadows they are, not men and women. There aren't men and women. There are only books. Folk don't think; they only read. They don't act; they are only actors playing the parts they read in books. They don't even see the foolishness of most they do. They think it all wisdom, because books say so, and 'tis agreed by them all that books are wisdom. Thanks be to goodness I never read a book; and I did well out of it. I wouldn't have done so if I'd followed the

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counsel of folk who passed it on from some book they read. Sure. And I want Diarmuid to be the very same sort, just as you say he is—seeing for himself, judging for himself, finding out for himself. He'll find the right track so. I know well what's going inside of him."

We all laughed heartily at this outburst; and as the laughter passed Aeneas O'Maille said:

"Certainly I believe he's looking for his track, as you say. And I don't believe he'd ask anybody's permission for the track he'll find. He's not exactly a great favourite with the other boys—not as Martin is—but they'll be said by him where they won't be said by Martin. He's a strange little fellow, very self-reliant, and oh, very deep. He's like a lake among the mountains." He turned to Helen. "Would you believe he is learned? Don't trust those reports. I'd have dispensed with them long ago, except that parents would think I was hiding my own inefficiencies from them. Martin's like many of the other boys. He learns for classes, and forgets soon afterwards. Not so Diarmuid. He remembers, and in the end you'll find him building up more than many another. Anyway, Diarmuid is Diarmuid. We weren't asked how we'd have him, any more than we were asked if we'd like roses without thorns. We've to help him to be more completely and perfectly himself. You may bend Martin. Not so Diarmuid."

Bronty also turned with his austere courtesy to reassure her.

"Did you say he was ten? Believe me, he's as old or as young as his experience, and that's saying a great deal for anyone. Maybe he's older than his experience, for he knows what he's looking for. You'd be surprised at some of his questions. There's a kind of alchemy in him that's ever turning information into experience."

I was mightily surprised at the tenderness in

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Brontë's voice. Helen turned from one to the other of them.

"Diarmuid has two good companions," she said. "And I am glad. I wouldn't be surprised if he wasn't better outside his home than he sometimes is inside. It often happens. It isn't altogether fair to leave these discoveries to be made outside." She was, I could see, thinking of his attitude toward his father; and that Jeremiah caught the reference was clear to me from the way he quickly looked round at her, and the emotion that came into his eyes for all his outward serenity. But she went on quietly: "I wish you would get him to realise that his right to be himself is one thing, but that to neglect his right to others is often selfish and more often unkind. It's not easy for a mother to say these things. From a mother they are simply fault-finding. But from his outside friends, especially when they are older than he and deservedly respected, they might have more weight."

Patrick Brontë looked up at her from under the lids of his eyes. Aeneas O'Maille turned about with troubled, questioning eyes. He was just about to speak, but Jeremiah spoke before him.

"Herself wants a scholar out of him, but I want a man who'll judge for himself and continue as it ought to be continued what has been built up for him. Never mind about books. Give up the use of his eyes; shape his judgment behind those eyes; and teach him that the only thing to be afraid of in life is fear. Now is the time for that. In the next five years he'll have it, or have it not, if I'm any judge."

"Expect too much from him and he'll shy. Let him alone and he'll shape."

It was Patrick Brontë who spoke, as though to himself. I believe only Jeremiah and myself saw in his words more than a passing remark. For O'Maille was speaking to Helen. He was replying to her earlier words.

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"Is he unkind at home?"

"Well, I won't say unkind. I am sure he'd be deeply grieved if I thought him unkind."

"I'm sure of that, too. But he might easily be all the same. He's sensitive, and sensitive people are unkind. Especially boys. In addition to that, he sees one or two things intensely to the neglect of other things. I'm glad you told me that. Unkindness is a terrible sin. That's what it is—unless it's a duty. I'll speak to him. Oh, never fear, he'll not know 'twas you spoke to me."

He turned laughingly to Jeremiah. "You've a programme for him, too, I see, even if it's not out of books. Let you not lay up disappointment for yourself. Each man's life is enough to itself, without his wishing to continue it in his children. Did you ever think he was like you? Well, he is, now. I understand him better out of you. And he's every bit as determined as you are."

From the quick way Jeremiah drew down his brows I knew he was pleased at the thought of that likeness.

"Never you fear about me," he said. "I know what's passing in Diarmuid, and I'll venture for the way he'll shape."

7.

No doubt at all Aeneas O'Maille did speak to Diarmuid. The result was unexpected, and it surely was not very happy.

The boy did not merely work, he slaved at his books till he distressed both himself and his mother. Her efforts to induce him to relax some of his labour only made him redouble it. Her wishes served only as incitements, as if he only looked for that token from her to plague himself the more. When he was not working he hung about his mother till his devotion became a hindrance to her. He denied himself his play to be near her—denied himself deliberately, I felt sure, taking pleasure in that denial. So

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awkward was he, so touching in his silent fidelity, that one longed to bid him away find his fellows and healthy occupation. Anything would have been better than that silent conscious sacrifice that distressed his mother most of all.

It was with Jeremiah, however, that the chief effect was felt. For with his father he was the very picture of confusion. It hurt one to witness that confusion, the more so as it confused Jeremiah also. If there were a chasm between these two, as it sometimes seemed that there was, the boy's painful attempts to bridge that chasm only made it the more apparent. He was as shy with his father as a youth in love, and as miserable. I am convinced it was love. I became convinced it was the utter inarticulateness of love seeking, not to find, but to break a vent for its expression. Pathetic, it was pathetic and awkward beyond words. With me or with his mother he might be quiet and natural; but at his father's approach he flushed and instantly became awkward, not looking at him searchingly and directly as he once had done, but diffidently from under bent brows.

Then the break came. One Sunday morning, after returning from Mass, Jeremiah in his usual hearty way suggested taking the two boys for a walk. Martin sprang up gleefully. Diarmuid rose slowly and, as by a great effort of will, went over towards Jeremiah with his hand outstretched. Before he reached his father he broke away and fled upstairs in a storm of tears.

After this Jeremiah was rough with him to put him at his ease. And, strange to say, it did put him at his ease. These two, of the same name and character, seemed to be more at ease with one another under relations of distance. That was the remarkable thing.

CHAPTER NINE

I.

As when a man, climbing a mountain, finds one height on another rising against him, and is committed to an infinite succession, even so it would be impossible to say, at any moment of Jeremiah's life, that he stood on the height of success. The height of to-day became the base of the morrow. The sigh of relief had barely time to begin before it was caught in a new shout of challenge. The muscles never relaxed. They hardly even rested. Perhaps that was why he never coarsened, but became physically more splendid with time. He might, and often did, speak of the feast to be set at the end of the day; but the chase was more to him than the feasting; and the pursuit was itself the prize. Others might have taken the gains; and he was generous to error; but this generosity was limited by the fact that those gains were being reserved for his sons.

Therefore it would not be possible to speak of him at any moment as standing on the height of his success. He was at any rate among the heights at this time. By necessity that fact coloured the rest of his days. It was wonderful with what freshness he took up one enterprise after another, never investing his money in any concern in which he was not the directive force. Yet when a man marches into his fiftieth year he begins to look over his shoulder. When he moves from one height to another, part of his adventure may be the next height before him, but part also is to know who will follow after him. For the great loneliness of mounting years is the terror that youth only can allay.

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Have it by what figure one will, but the unfigured and unfigurable reality was that the adventure of Jeremiah's days henceforward lay mainly within his household, whereas hitherto it had mainly lain without. The only outstanding exception was his newspaper.

Ever since the famous Case, as anyone living in close touch with him could perceive, his thoughts had wandered about the function of the Press. This was a matter in which he did not hurry. It involved questions that required thought. Just the kind of thought he most relished.

He himself said: "There are things people talk about, and there are things people do not. The things people talk about aren't of any consequence. That's the first thing your folk who write books never learned. They write books about what people say and discuss. But it's the things people don't say and won't discuss are the only things that matter. It's the old devil of fear again. If there's a whole roomful of folk all afraid of one thing, they'll surely all be talking eighteen to the dozen about every other thing but that one thing. Sure. Nothing could be surer. But it's not what they're talking about that matters. It's the one thing they're too careful ever to mention is the only thing that matters. And that's the one thing that's so damnable hard to discover. It's the secrets of folk that matter, not the clatter and chatter of their tongues that they only wag for a disguise, because they're afraid.

"Look at your history-books, the lies they are. Why, man, they don't even tell you about the things folk at any time agree so well about that they never write or talk them. They cannot, for books only come out of books. Historians only pick the things folk write about because they don't agree about them. They set themselves up for judges that these things distinguished the folk of that time. But the thing that distinguished them was what they

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never bothered to write. Therefore it can never be discovered, because folk breathed it and eat it and walked it and smelt it, and did every other damned thing with it but write it. Every history-book, William, is a lie. It's as if I said the ocean was the currachs on it. It's the battle of Waterloo, or it's some other battle, or the heroism of the brave lads dying, or the inextinguishable story of something or other or some man in a red or purple coat. Not the hunger of empty bellies, or the men making money out of that hunger, you may be sure. Oh, no.

"Life's not these things at all, man. Early enough I found out not to give heed to the things people said, but to search out the way people acted. That's what matters. That's the hot trail. But that's the thing that's surely hidden. That's what governs us all, and we swing back to it as the compass comes back to the point. And why isn't it spoken of? Fear, William, fear. That's where the big man comes into the business. He finds out that fear, he faces it, and he controls it. He's the master of every person then. He's in the engine-room, and his hand is on the control."

He sat at his desk, and his daily paper was spread out before him at the money-page. He struck it with his fist. "Look at that now," he said. I came, and looked over his shoulder. Three of its columns were occupied with a company report. The rest contained the usual business of such a page.

"Look at it. It's simply singing with what's not said. All the rest"—he turned back impatiently over the other pages—"is sugar to the pill where it's not echo to the voice. I'll tell you what it puts me in the mind of . . ."

He lay back in his chair, with his arms spread out before him.

"Away back in Connemara, when the Spring's come, and the hills all blue and the sun shining,

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and ne'er a sound but an old goose or a woman singing, you'll see the currachs hauling out for the current. It looks very beautiful, I won't deny. It's the sort of thing poets write poems about, and other fellows paint pictures. You'd say 'twas the sun brought them out, or the Spring, or the sea, or the fish even. 'Twasn't, well. It was the long account at the shopkeeper. I don't say, mind you, that the men pulling at the sticks aren't talking of the fish, and the sun, and the Spring, and many another thing. But the thing that takes them out is the thing they don't talk about. It's the canny lad that's watching them from the window, and that'll meet them at the shore, to sell their catch at any price he wishes, and to give them credit at any price he says, and he knowing well they cannot stir from him because of the long account. What matter their talk or their sport? He's the master of them. He's the only one of them all that's not afraid. . . .

"That," said he, striking the page again, "is what this puts me in mind of. The more I think of it the more sure I am that a newspaper's the great thing if a person is to master all. Remember the way it brought me out of the tightest place ever I was in. Sure, William, if it loses itself it would yet win. What's losing on itself against winning on every other thing? It's the one sure way of getting past the things folk talk about to the things they don't. And that's the great thing. I'm telling you there's more hidden behind that page than politics and wars and all the other news it prints. There's the making of all these things. They're only the currachs pulling out to the current, I tell you. Sure. I wish I had the beginning again with the money I've got and the knowledge I've learned. What's seventy or eighty years? It's pure waste. Anyway, there are the boys coming after me; and I've got to think for them, too. I'm going to leave them something to begin with; and if I don't put

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their hands on the control levers I'm not the man I think I am."

2.

Constantly he reverted to the subject. Small wonder that I was constantly expecting a practical development. I feared it indeed, for I knew the risks and difficulties; but I knew equally well that the thoughts he entertained as guests remained to share his house with him. Yet on this occasion he kept them as guests for several years without finding them permanent quarters. He was determined, apparently, to test their conversation fully.

Lengthy guests, however, have a habit of insistence; and his thoughts were so familiar up and down the corridors of his mind that there was little fear for their ejection. Whether the turn of his fiftieth year had anything to do with the sudden hastening of his decision I could not say. It would be surprising if that reminder of a limit to experiments with life were without its effect. Anyway, I learnt from him, in the casual way he ever made me acquainted with his decisions, that he had decided to accept an offer of acquiring a considerable share in a daily newspaper. He mentioned no names; but I thought it time to enter my warning.

"I have felt, Jeremiah, for some time that you have been contemplating such a step. You have been thinking about it. But so have I. First of all, may I ask, is this paper to have a national outlook?"

"It happens so," he replied coolly; "but I'm not thinking of that. That sort of thing's for men with a hobby. I amn't a politician. It's all one with me what sort of badge men stick in their coats as long as they do business with me. I want you to understand that I'm not thinking in this of talk at all, but of other things altogether. . . ."

"I asked you because you know it means a very great deal to me. . . ."

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"I don't say I haven't hobbies, too. That's what has made me think so carefully over it. In this country things aren't laid out as simply as they are in other countries, and that's the devil of it. So long as the people have made up their mind one way we'll have in the end to settle the political business that way. There's no other way to get straight into business—to facts, that's to say. But I want a paper. I've too many interests, and I'm going to have too many more, for me to be able to do without it. Otherwise I'll be travelling the bye-roads of the country instead of going straight down the high road. I'm in need of just that backing and influence. And now I have a chance of a concern that's reconstructing and looking for bigger capital, I've made up my mind to try something altogether new in the way of business——"

I guessed now to what he referred; but as he had not mentioned any names, neither did I.

"It didn't pay very well to this anyway," I said.

"It did not," he replied coolly.

"What makes you suppose it will now?"

"I don't suppose anything of the sort. It'll pay me if I play the game right."

"But what about the company?"

"The company can go be . . ." His impatient explosion was unlike him; but he checked it instantly. He drew out a cigar, and deliberately cracked and lit it before proceeding. "It might not fail. Wouldn't we be fools to think it will? If it should happen that way, we'll be holding up a great ideal, and I as chairman will suffer as much as any other, and more than most. In the meantime, it'll have a proper money page, which it didn't till now, and it'll keep our national industries well to the front. Could anything be fairer than that? Patriotism begins at home, William, believe me. I haven't much faith in a man who waves a green flag but doesn't buy his goods in an Irish store, or who doesn't build

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up his nervous system with a genuine Irish product that's both food and medicine. Isn't that wholesome policy? And there's many another thing he could buy made at home. If they are made now we'll tell him which, and prove we're as good as our faith by buying the shares first. If they are not, why then we must get them made, and tell him about them. What's losing a little on the paper beside becoming a national benefactor? You surprise me, William. You do indeed. You don't show a proper spirit."

What was one to say to him, and he sitting there as grave as a judge? He never once turned round to look at me.

"Ay, and there's many another thing. They fold in and out with one another wonderfully, so they do. I'm surprised at myself that I never saw it myself till now; but I wasn't ready till now to be able to use it. That's the great pity, for it's only now I'm beginning. It's only now I'm beginning. I'm like a man starting out to explore a big country. It's a great pity the Almighty God didn't give us a few years more to live. But He gave us sons anyway, and I'll put them in the way of carrying on the work."

3.

He was as good as his word. He always referred to the paper as a business man's hobby, as his relaxation from mere money-making; and for that he won honour not a little, and the kindly judgment of his fellows, who saw him careless of gain for a principle. All this he bore with restrained dignity, shrugging his shoulders at his own folly. But they could not perceive the nicety with which he adjusted his many interests to suit that folly, or that folly to suit his many interests, and how that folly carried him to heights till now unlearned. Always his eyes were for the future. His thoughts ran ahead of his plans, as his plans ran ahead of his execution.

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Surely he had conquered fear, having passed beyond it. The future, the source of most of the world's fear, was the country toward which he urged himself, with challenges against Time.

Yet if he had no fear for the future, I had. I believe Helen shared my fear, though she never spoke to me of it. For his glance was often thrown over his shoulder; and the sons of whom he spoke so confidently did not justify their father's faith.

Martin was not to be blamed. He went from school to the University, and continued his course there with honour. He had intelligence of no small sort; and it was not his fault if he did not, with all his rapidity of mind, convey the sense of capacity. He was now tall, and in height took after his father as in appearance he took rather after his mother. With clear blue eyes, auburn hair, and undistinguished features, he was pleasing of appearance as he was of an obliging and sunny disposition. Whatever he was bidden do, he did, and did quite well, without arousing in anyone any unnecessary enthusiasm. Possibly I saw him too much with his father's eye. He was most lovable, and everywhere a favourite; but he was not his father's man, and I was always uneasy for him. I could not see him fill even my own little part in Jeremiah's scheme of things, while Jeremiah wanted someone who could have hired my sort.

Diarmuid, intractable boy and slow scholar, was his father's man. In every way he was so, but the one way. None but commented on the mere physical likeness between the two. Yet he was his father's man to whom some queer thing had happened in the meantime, with the result that their unlikeness made mockery of their likeness and their likeness enforced their unlikeness. For example, they both had the same deep blue eyes, the same proud richness, now soft and luring as if strange spirits stirred beneath their waters laughterful and

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mocking, now clouded and enigmatic, and now suddenly shining out with a curiously radiant light that made one's thought stand like a naked tree against the dawn. But their changes answered to causes utterly different. The bells might have been the same, but the air how unlike. Speaking with one and then with the other I was like a bell-ringer pulling my notes, and hearing utterly unexpected melodies. Speak with the elder of these two of any impossible act of chivalry, and the light in his eyes would at once be guarded, though I knew well how chivalrous he himself could be without demonstration. But speak with the other of the same act, and the light would shine out instantly, though the lips were pressed in silence. Yet the constant bewilderment was that these changes left one with a sense of likeness, not of unlikeness, between the two.

That was one only of many similarities one could cite; yet I was more uneasy for Diarmuid than I was for Martin. To my constant distress, and to Helen's constant distress (and I believe to their own distress), Diarmuid and his father were like two who were destined never to meet, because they were always missing their spiritual appointments. For they had these spiritual appointments. We were all perfectly aware of them; and there lay our distress, for when one was punctually present the other was away. They never failed just not to meet.

Of what avail then was it for Jeremiah to look over his shoulder?

4.

I greatly blamed the lad's friendship with Patrick Brontë. Aeneas O'Maille himself, fine man and excellent schoolmaster though he were, was not the best influence if father and son were to meet, for he carried Diarmuid down roads along which Jeremiah was never likely to travel. It is impossible to speak ill of O'Maille. One might as well speak ill of the sun or the sea. But there are other things

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in the world than the sun and the sea. Yet, whatever about Aeneas O'Maille I was never in doubt about Patrick Bronty. My thoughts in that matter were fully shared by Helen. They had begun to be shared by Jeremiah himself. About this time I first noticed the beginning of that jealousy of the other man that afterwards led to the breaking of their friendship. And to see the beginning of jealousy in a man like Jeremiah was as tragic as the first break in a bird's song that foretells the silence of July.

The common understanding of these three—Diarmuid, Patrick Bronty and Aeneas O'Maille—seemed to be fairly deeply set, if one may judge by their coolness and hardness with one another. When one saw them together, one thought less of the disparity of their ages, or of any other disparity of character, than of their common purpose, even if no purpose were expressed between them. Something it was that included them so firmly, and as firmly excluded others. The fact that they generally spoke in Irish to one another only emphasised that exclusion, so painful to us all; but it required something deeper to create it.

It was their custom on Saturdays to take long walks together. Aeneas O'Maille first organised these walks among those of his boys who cared to accompany him; and Helen had heartily assented to Diarmuid being of the number. Then we heard that Patrick Bronty had begun to join the party. To that who could object? But when it became a practice from which nothing could deter Diarmuid, though he and his father were seldom to be discovered in company together, then Helen began to be troubled; and from her I caught my concern. Whatever happened, fair weather and foul, that party always walked abroad; and the only satisfaction was that on his return Diarmuid was talkative and tractable, as if the day's fatigue had put him at his ease.

So Helen determined to speak to Diarmuid, and

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she chose one such night when it chanced that Jeremiah was out. As usual his supper stood ready for him, though Helen, Martin and I had completed ours. He flung aside the satchel he wore on such occasions, and at once sat at the table. Helen was silent. Her silence impressed itself on all of us, and I saw Diarmuid glance up with a puzzled expression at her.

"Are you wondering why I'm so silent, Jerry?" she asked. She had some needlework in her hands, and she did not look up at him.

Diarmuid looked round. "Where is he?" he asked.

She looked up at him with a slight smile. "Well, Diarmuid then. Did you wonder why I was silent?"

"I suppose you're going to tell me now anyway."

"You couldn't guess, could you?"

"If it had anything to do with my footing abroad, I might."

"How soon you guessed, dear boy."

"Guessing wasn't very hard. Weren't you going roundabout to tell me for weeks?" He was silent for some minutes, and she maintained her temperate silence apparently to compel him to speech. She succeeded. "But I always looked to see was there anything you wanted," he added, with just a trace of sullenness.

"I'm sure of that, Jerry. . . ."

"Where is he?"

"I'm sure of that," she repeated, and did not this time surrender to the reminder he had lately taken on him to enforce. "But still. . . ."

"How did you know mother didn't want you?"

Martin broke in with the lordly way of the man of nineteen.

Diarmuid frowned quickly, and looked hard at his brother for an instant. Then he turned coolly toward his mother.

"Where did you and Martin go this day?" he asked.

Martin flushed; as well he might, for he had been watching a football match.

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"Oh, that's cheap," he said.

"Cheapness went begging anyway," came the retort; and Martin thought better than to follow the exchanges further. Helen interposed.

"You know, dear boy, I wasn't thinking of myself. If I wanted you to come along with me anywhere, I'd just ask you, and I know you'd not refuse. . . ."

"Not if it was to tea some place," he interrupted with assumed sullenness.

"Even to tea some place. But here you are always with these men, making friends with people older than yourself, which is never good, while I never see you with your father."² Diarmuid's troubled eyes looking fixedly at his mother were a mute appeal to her not to continue that theme; but she did not look at him, and continued evenly. "Why should you avoid your father for these men? You're old enough now to understand yourself. You're older than your years . . . too old indeed. What is the cause of it, tell me?"

His simple appeal made me wish to come to his aid; but I felt Helen, for some reason of her own, had chosen this time and setting, and so I said nothing.

The lad was confused. His eyes were dark with trouble as he looked first at his mother, and then at me. They turned for a quick glance at his brother; and Martin caught that glance.

"He doesn't want to speak because I'm here," he said.

Then those eyes lit with anger; but his tongue was every ready for such occasions, and his retort was deliberate enough.

"It's seldom tale-bearers remember history. Even their own."

"I suppose you want me to leave the room. Well, I won't."

"You're safer here, most certainly."

"Now, boys," warned Helen. "I know what

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I'm doing, dear boy. Don't you think it's time we did all tell tales? It would break down this strange awkwardness, which grieves me. Do you suppose any mother likes to see strangers taking the place the father ought to hold? I'm saying nothing about Mr. O'Maille. Schoolmasters ought to be liked and respected, and to have their place of privilege. That's but right. But it's different with Mr. Bronty."

"Bronty's a factionist," Martin interrupted again.

Diarmuid, who was confused while Helen was speaking, turned with relief towards Martin again.

"That's a new word now. That's all of going to a university. You ought to keep butterflies. You'd have great satisfaction sticking little labels under them, so you would. You're a pure waste in anything useful. What does it mean anyhow?"

"It means what it says, Factionist."

The cool deliberateness of this boy was remarkable. He fixed his attention silently on Martin, then turned from him; and the manner of this simple act was more than the most cutting retort.

"Mother," he said, "Padraic's my friend."

"He's having a very great influence over you, I notice."

"If you mean I'm finding out from him what I want to know . . ." he began, and stopped abruptly, looking suspiciously at his mother's unperturbed and innocent eyes.

"That's right, dear boy. But what do you want to find out about?"

Her eyes searched his, till his gave up the encounter, and looked over to engage with me. Whatever he saw in mine I do not know, but he suddenly smiled—a ghost of a smile, as quickly gone as seen, but very beautiful.

"Things that are never talked about in this house," he said defiantly. And then he added pugnaciously: "Things we take tarnation good care to shoulder when they do cross us."

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"But what things?" she persisted smilingly.

I was looking at him, and he hardened before my eyes. The glance from his eyes was like nothing so much as a blade of steel.

"Oh, never mind," he said coldly; and he picked up a magazine, opened it, and began to read.

Helen still looked steadily at him, but, failing to attract him, she knew better than to pursue the subject.

In the silence we heard the front door open and close, and his father's steps in the hall outside.

5.

Jeremiah came into the room, and looked round from one to another of us. I presume we were all looking at Diarmuid, who was now restless and confused, merely pretending to be reading. For Jeremiah turned to him, too, and then returned to Helen.

"Hello," he said, "what's this? What were ye all thinking about?"

"Diarmuid, what were we all talking about?" she asked.

The boy's confusion in his father's presence was painful to see, and I marvelled at Helen's ruthlessness. Probably his inclination was to fly from the room; but he held his ground. Surely he knew the occasion to be an open test; for he hardened himself clearly. Then he turned about, and for the first time engaged his father openly.

"We were talking about Padraic Bronty," he said. His voice was steady, and he looked Jeremiah straight in the eyes.

"Oho, the Fenian."

If Jeremiah had wished to arouse the boy he succeeded. Those eyes flashed at once. There was no thought now of flight. Helen had certainly succeeded in bringing these two face to face if that were her intention.

"Well, what were ye saying about him?" Jeremiah asked Helen.

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"Well, Diarmuid, dear boy, what were we saying?"

"Mother objected to him footing abroad with us."

"Now, Diarmuid, was that really it?" she asked softly.

"Mother objected to Padraic footing abroad with us," he repeated.

"And you, what did you say?"

Diarmuid rose to his feet. "I said he was my friend." His voice rose to a challenge on the last word.

Jeremiah winced—imperceptibly, but I saw it, and my heart went out to that dear man. He went over calmly towards Helen, however.

"Well, that finishes it, doesn't it?" he said. It was to Helen he spoke. "There's no more to that. If you put stones in that stream you'll have a flood against you. Let it run its course out."

"He said he was finding out things from Bronty we never talk about at home. That's what he said." It must, of course, be Martin to stir up the waters again as they settled. "Politics, I suppose. A fat lot a boy like that knows about politics."

Jeremiah looked over at Diarmuid, who still stood as he had risen.

"What's this?" he asked. He spoke smoothly, but I had heard that smoothness before.

Diarmuid said nothing, but stood grimly facing him.

"Sit down, boy; sit down. Why should you always put yourself into the dock when I say anything to you? Time enough when you're put in the dock surely; and did I ever put you there? We'd all be there if we'd our rights, do you know? For the love of goodness, have sense."

I was delighted, for never had I heard Jeremiah speak so frankly to Diarmuid. By that I knew surely that he had some real issue in his own mind to face. And Diarmuid did sit. At one moment he had looked as if he would break down. His lips had quivered and his eyes had darkened. He was under great control.

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"Now, what is it we never speak of at home? Tell me. I'm just interested, for I didn't know there was such a thing."

I thought Diarmuid would never answer. But he could not escape from his father. He answered at last, slowly and accusingly :

"Ireland."

We were all startled at the answer, so simple and yet spoken with such depth of tragic meaning. But Jeremiah laughed.

"Is that all?"

"That's all." Each word was weighed with separate accusation, as though the speaker were in wonder that his charge should seem so small in the speaking.

"Musha, boy dear, little wonder why we shouldn't. Don't we live in it, breathe it, and eat it, and drink it, and walk about in it, and delight in it? Do you suppose we could do that in any other place? And isn't that enough for us? Let us leave other folks to do the talking, and be sure they'll do that in plenty. We've got other things to do with our time than to make a parliament of our meat and drink. We pay other people to do that for us. Go where you like, Diarmuid, and do what you like. You'll do that in any case, I suppose, so there's no use in making a tune on the old fiddle about it. I won't hinder you; but my advice to you is, don't worry about the clothes you wear until you go to a party, or you'll become nothing but a dandy like Martin here. But you'll grow out of that too, Martin. And now away to bed. Good-night."

For all his ready dismissal of the subject, Jeremiah was very quiet and reflective the rest of that night. He sat smoking without a word till he went to bed. It was not merely that he did not speak, but he did not make it possible for us to speak. Something unusual had been stirred in him. He was constrained, and barely noticed us as he wished us a good-night.

CHAPTER TEN

I.

TILL now I had been but a spectator, drawn lovingly into the more intimate concerns of this family, but wishful not to intrude. Only from without had I seen them, for only at some of their cross-roads had I been present. My life had been lived rather with Jeremiah Hare the business man, Jeremiah Hare the initiator and governor of large enterprises, and now Jeremiah Hare the public figure. But I was destined apparently to form part of this other life, too; and to see, here too, more than most of the others could see. I wonder much at the hazard that put into my hand always the copy of their play with the marginal notes. I never sought that copy. The most natural chance always gave it me.

For the following morning as I dressed for breakfast a light knock fell on my door. Before I could answer, the door opened, and Diarmuid slipped in. He came as if he expected someone to follow him.

"You don't mind my coming like this, do you?" he said breathlessly at first.

"Of course not," I said, covering my surprise.

"Are you sure?"

I smiled at him. "Just pretend that I do."

"Oh, now I know you don't," he said confidently, sitting on the edge of my bed. "Why do people always say, of course not, when they mind most of all?"

"Mind what?"

"Oh, any sort of thing, every sort of thing."

"But do they? I hadn't noticed it."

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"Now you're doing it yourself." Never have I been reproved as I was by that utter disappointment. "Why should people pretend things? Is there any fun in pretending, or is the whole world a lot of fools?"

"Do you think they really do? Who does, for instance?"

"Everybody does. Even mother. They say one thing, and sometimes they mean that, but more times they mean something else."

I turned my back on him to pick a collar, and said lightly: "Your father doesn't anyway."

I was glad I had turned, for his answer left me breathless.

"Father most of all. He's always pretending. He's always meaning something else, and you couldn't tell what he means from what he says. Sometimes he's only funning, but then you wouldn't mind, but more times he isn't. Is he like that in Dublin?"

"I don't know that he is," I answered slowly, finding myself a little shaken.

I knew he was examining me from behind, and I turned about in order that he might search my face for an answer. It was better to surrender all defences to this questioner—whose questions so rarely found voice.

"I believe he is," he said. "I don't believe he does anything else, ever. But look, I've got to be quick. Tell me, why don't you like Padraic Bronty?"

I was about to frame a defence, but happily remembered, and remained silent instead.

"Because you don't, you know. You just hate him. Why?"

"I don't think his influence is a good one."

"You just say that because you hate him. But why do you hate him? . . . I say, you don't mind my talking like this, do you?"

His quick eagerness faltered on the question, and he became his embarrassed self again. But I was too deeply touched by his confidence not to prove worthy

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of it, however impertinent it may have seemed. Better far my embarrassment of fifty years than his of fourteen. So I hastened to re-assure him.

"Not a bit. Always be frank with me, please. But don't you think there's something of hatred in Patrick Brontë, too? I'm frank with you, too, do you see. I doubt is there anything but hatred in him. It seems to me he's the coolest hater I ever met, and that's why I say I don't think he's a good influence. No good ever came out of hatred, Diarmuid."

"I wonder now"—his face was downcast and perplexed. "He loves Ireland"—it was uplifted with an open light shining on it. "He does love Ireland always."

"How much of that is love and how much is hatred?" I asked him. Indeed, I asked him less than I suggested gently, for a boy's faith should not be untenderly handled.

"That's right, too," he cogitated; and then he stood before me with his eyes flashing just like his father's. "But a fellow has got to hate some things: jolly well got to. Look at here now. There was a fellow bullying a little one the other day—a big slob of a chap twisting a little monkey's arms up his back, and the nipper yelping his best note. What would you say to that?"

"And what did you do?"

"Do? It wasn't long till I did, well. I hoofed his backside till he went down all of a heap. That banjaxed his little game. You should have heard his hullabulloo. But the Master didn't mind. Not really. I could see that. 'You might have injured him for life, do you know that, my son?' says he, grinning a little at the mouth. I wish to the holy smoke I had injured him for life, the blighter. But hasn't a fellow got to hate that? I know what I know; and I say if he doesn't he's not worth taking any count of. I'm not with Padraic in everything, do you know; but I'm with him all the way in that. So ought you to be,

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instead of hating him back. That's what I can't understand, your hating him. Because you do hate him, if you don't know it."

"Your mother doesn't favour him either," I said; for I could not pursue this personal note.

"Mother's different." All of a sudden he was different again. He had become moodily rebellious. "You're different in this house from the others. That long ass Martin doesn't count, with his cigarettes and his tall collars. He'd cough out anything was told him. But the others don't talk about Ireland. They don't even think about Ireland. Mother doesn't understand—it's not her sort of thing, splendid and all as she is. And Father's making-believe about something, whatever it is. It's just because Padraic lives for something that they never talk about here that I want to know what he has got to say."

"I see. And did he tell you that about your father?"

"He did not. I'd like to see him try. He always gives gameball to father. Says he's a genius; and he is, too. There's no doubt about that: father's a genius, whatever it is he's following out."

He spoke his last words slowly, contemplatively. It was my clear duty to rally him, though I had wished only to encourage him. I did so.

"Now, Diarmuid boy, I knew how strange you are with your father. It puzzles me, who know your father so long and so well; and it grieves your mother, as 'tis plain to see. Let's get to the heart of this . . . that is, if I'm worth your confidence. I'd like to be, do you know. What's the cause of it?"

"Tell me this, you, then," said he, now the fierce questioner. "Why does he never talk about these other things? It's always likely in him, but it never comes off. You know that just as well as I do. Mother's different; but what's he driving at?"

"Do you really think he's driving at anything, Diarmuid?"

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"What's the good of talking?" he said impatiently.
"Don't you know yourself he is?"

I looked on this questioner, so greatly assuming. How little he knew that his words astonished me, though there was something in them quaintly familiar, too.

"And is that why you avoid him?" I asked him.

"Who's avoiding him? I'd do a lot more for him than ever that Martin would, for all his bumming-up. But I'm going to find out my own things for myself, and there's a lot more things than I can find here." He paused a moment; then leant forward with astonishing acuteness. Cut out, he was, like an interrogation. "Do you remember how he told us always to keep our eyes skinned? That's right, too; and I won't let anybody put a finger in my eye."

Then his body swiftly relaxed, and fear came into his eyes, for the deep tone of the breakfast gong spread like a pervading music through the house.

"I say, that was quick, wasn't it? You won't tell anyone I was here, will you?"

"Not if you don't wish me to."

"I shouldn't ever speak to you again if you did."

"Oh, you can trust my confidence, Diarmuid."

He was gone. Hardly was he gone than he was back again. But he was different. Even in this little time he had changed altogether. A collected and observant Diarmuid had returned.

"Did you see the way mother made me face the guns yesterday? It was fine. Mother's what you call a splendid Spartan. No slop about her. And it was just what I wanted, do you know. You see if I didn't learn that lesson, too."

He was gone again. I stood looking in the mirror to assure myself of my own identity, before I followed him down the stairs. I had need of further assurance as we sat at breakfast. Diarmuid was, I thought, more confident than usual, but in the main there was little difference in him. He was as silent, as compact,

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as reserved as ever. Was this the boy that had come to me with a confidence as direct as an arrow's flight? It seemed unbelievable.

2.

Unquestionably there was a change in Diarmuid from that day. No doubt it had been shaping for some time beyond my sight . . . beyond the sight of all of us, unless Helen had divined it. But I can find no sign of it before this time; and so from this time I date it. It was not all at once apparent; yet it grew steadily more and more apparent.

He was as reserved as ever; and with his father especially so; but his shyness turned to hardness and his confusion resolved into deliberation. There was no doubt that the result was one of intention, and one was left guessing at the thought that had prompted the intention. He was schooling himself to a part. Oddly enough, it made him still more like Jeremiah, though it challenged him.

That challenge was first heard the following Saturday.

We were all sitting at breakfast. Breakfast was always a silent meal with us, for Jeremiah was usually busy with his paper; and now that the paper was his own the silence—his silence certainly—was even more reflective. Through this silence Diarmuid's voice spoke, hard and defiant.

"I'm footing abroad to-day, father."

Jeremiah looked up in surprise from his paper.

"Are you?" he said. "Well, I suppose you are. Where are you going?"

"Padraic Bronty's coming with us."

"Is that so?" Jeremiah said, recoiling, and turning back to his paper, before the manifest challenge of the words.

I looked quickly in amazement from one to the other. For it was Diarmuid who was collected, and Jeremiah, remarkable to say, who was confused. Yet

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the foolish boy overdid the unnecessary part he had apparently elected to play. His voice recalled Jeremiah from his retreat.

"I won't go if you'd wish me not to."

"Why should I wish you not to?" Jeremiah asked, pathetically rather, I thought.

"I just asked."

"Certainly go. I hope you'll have a good day."

Amazement crowded on me. For if Jeremiah's words conveyed anything to me, who knew him so well, they conveyed this, that he would have given greatly to have been free at that moment to withdraw his consent. And that thought darkened my mind while Helen came to the relief.

"But, Jerry, it was I who wished you not to. I didn't object, I needn't say, to excursions now and then; but I did say that every week, and always in the same company of people so much older than you, was not good. And I say so now."

"I know, mother. But you said it was because of father you spoke, and that's why I asked father now."

Jeremiah looked across at her with sharp question, but Helen was not easily discomfited. A scarcely perceptible smile shone in her eyes as she looked first at her husband, then at her son.

"So you did, and father answered you. But there was no need surely, dear boy, to ask a simple question quite in the way you did."

"It was just like his damned impudence," said Martin, having awaited his turn, but in fine healthy championship all the same.

"Martin, hold your tongue. Never you intrude into other people's affairs. You have too much a habit of that."

Seldom have I seen Jeremiah angry; never before with his sons; but there was no mistaking his anger now. His voice barked across the table, and his glance was a thing to fear. In his own hearty way he apologised before he went, by rumpling the hair

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of both boys for farewell. But the silence of the rest of that meal was uneasy as it had never been before.

3.

All that day I was very vexed with Diarmuid when I saw how moody Jeremiah was. He was a different man. Pugnacious he might have been; harsh he might have been; ferocious, boisterous or whimsical; equable, caustic or cunning; fierce against odds or triumphant in success; or any or all of the many changes that he gathered into one fundamentally joyous self; but, whatever the occasion, never had I seen him moody, never had I known him when it could have been suggested that Life was distasteful to him, or work displeasing. Therefore I was lost when I saw the work fall from his hands listlessly that day, while he sat in silence before it. I yearned to rally him; but so greatly was he a different man, that I could do nothing. I did not know him; I had lost the key to him; and so I could only be vexed with Diarmuid. He even let me go home alone, and stayed in the office during the afternoon; and I had never known him to do that on a Saturday before.

The mood passed, for he could never be long thus, as I knew. For him not to be confident and assured would be surely for him to lay down his life, and he was in the prime of his years. During the week-end indeed he seemed inclined to avoid us all; but during the following week he was, if anything, fiercer of energy than ever before. Quite needlessly, it seemed to me, he overhauled his Stores from bottom to top, not only with his managers, but with the departmental heads also, reconstructing everywhere, and energising all with his own excess. That was for a sign that he was himself again.

Yet I noticed that as the Saturdays came round he seemed—it is difficult to fix his strangeness with a

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word, yet apprehensive best supplies the need. Did he expect that Diarmuid would speak again? Did he hope for it, or fear it? How little we know those beside whom we live. For my part, I hoped the lad would not again speak as he did that morning. And I determined to put it to Diarmuid that it would mean much to his father, and much to himself also, if he would one day not "foot abroad," but offer his company to his father instead.

I was fully determined to do this; and yet I did not. The onward-striding of life put the occasion past me. The chance seemed lost, or I carelessly forgot.

For that occasion was now becoming entangled in another. As the months passed Jeremiah cooled towards Patrick Bronty. The cooling was in full progress before I was aware of it. Indeed, it was in full progress before Bronty was aware of it; for I perfectly remember his first start of surprise, his eyes that suddenly looked outward, bright with wonder when this discovery first swam before his sight. I would go further yet and say that I believe it was not until then that Jeremiah himself was aware of the thing that had, with pangs and pulsations, been forming and growing in his heart. Before us all, and to our mutual horror, the ungainly thing then first appeared, like an octopus whose limbs were entangled in the hidden parts of all our lives, for the first time giving us knowledge of a secret distress that we had been nourishing unaware.

For Diarmuid had almost become forgotten again. His confidence with me had not been resumed; and he had become again like a pedalled motive of unrest through the upper, more dominant harmonies of our life—when suddenly that unrest emerged on the upper keys to disturb the harmonies that there were being woven together. That is now clear to me in retrospect; though it was not clear to me at the time; for henceforward the unrest was to master the harmony, and to master it mysteriously with queer

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reminiscences at all times of the tales that Father Laverty used to tell me in my old lodgings.

4.

It was in July, 1910; that is to say, when Diarmuid was in his fifteenth year. Somebody had called to see Jeremiah at Dame Street. I forget his name (if indeed it ever mattered): but I cannot forget his fat soapy neck almost as white as the collar that caught it in a vice, his fat, fidgety fingers, his beady eyes, like bright unwholesome jewels set in puckers of fat. These unhappy jewels were very penetrating and cunning, and perhaps, therefore, he was wise in constantly drawing their fat setting about them till they appeared narrow as slits. His belly was rotund, and seemed all the more so because of the little legs that moved quickly under it when he walked, or crossed and uncrossed constantly when he sat. Yet, if one may imagine a bird so unnatural, he was as quick as a bird in all his movements, and as suspicious of his company.

His attire was smooth and his manner prosperous and one resented his air of intimate confidence with Jeremiah. To see him and Jeremiah together was unnatural. Indecent, even. There are some, indeed, who make splendour appear more splendid, by contrast; but there are others the very sight of whose hands would dim the splendour of the sun. It is the difference between the gross and the loathsome. It is the difference between the ills of the body and the evils of the soul.

He came rapidly into the room, his legs twinkling under him with remarkable agility, gripped first Jeremiah and then me with a grey-gloved hand, sat between us, and, drumming on Jeremiah's desk with his fingers, ran as rapidly into the midst of his business.

"I understand," he said, making slits of his eyes and peering at Jeremiah through them; "I wish,

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that is to say, to come to an arrangement with you about a little matter of business. It is our intention, of course, to advertise in your admirable paper. I must say indeed—you will permit me—that that journal fills a perfect place in our national life. Its care for industrial activity—for industrial activities of all kinds—is commendable. We are all in its debt. In your debt, that is to say, sir. All of us, that is to say, who look to such a journal for its support in the general advantage. In the general advantage. It's the only journal in which one could, or should, advertise, and advertise largely. That goes without saying. But advertising as you know so well is a small thing. A relatively small thing. The great thing is influence. And when I speak of influence I come on to a different plane. A different plane—in fact a personal plane. We leave journals behind us, and get to the power behind them. That's to say, to persons—to big forces, to the living human being. The living human being. A few hundreds will do the journals—the advertisements, that's to say—but you need not think I fail to realise, sir, that thousands—or let us say, the equivalent of thousands, for the world's a poor world—are anything in the matter when we come to the big forces."

He stayed his speed just a minute, and peered at Jeremiah to observe the effect of this, before he rattled on again. Perhaps what he saw hardly encouraged him to slacken to a more practicable pace, for Jeremiah was surveying him with cool appraising eyes.

So he rattled on again, doubling backward and forward through his sentences, in the way of his sort, barely pausing now and again to drop a sentence charged with the special purpose of his visit. At these stops he would gather up the fat puckers round his eyes, and, from behind that defence, peer across at Jeremiah.

He was an odious man, yet he was no fool. It was clear that his tumbling speech was a well-practised

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craft, the intention of which was to lead the way to sentences that declared the purpose of his visit while saying nothing that committed him.

"You, sir," he said, "are of course a man to whom we all look up. All of us—especially those of us engaged in industrial enterprises in the general advantage. I think I may speak without fear of contradiction. You are universally respected—very, very properly, for men do not attain your altitude—your altitude—without becoming the repository of trust. Men—your fellows—look up to you. They do indeed. Your known influence is an asset, and an asset—is an asset. That's just it. If I may say so, it's more than money, it's a cheque-book. For what is money, indeed, beside the power of creating money? It's a pound against a thousand. You follow me?"

Apparently he had got to it now, for he stopped and waited for Jeremiah to extract the pearl of his meaning from the tangle of his words. And Jeremiah picked the pearl with great deliberation, and held it up to the light.

"My influence in the paper is only the influence of one man——"

"But such a man!" the other exclaimed in an enraptured voice, the rapture baffled in its husky purpose.

"... I hope you aren't thinking that my influence, the little it is, is to be priced backward and forward like a fortune in a match. I hope you're not thinking that." He spoke quietly and reprovingly, and his eyes were kindly.

"My dear sir, I hope I did not convey that impression." I can hear him yet, and see the cunning of his eyes. "Such a thing indeed. Such a thing—and to you of all men. I assure you—but to engage your interest—that's to say, to engage your interest, and to defer to your judgment. How easy it would be simply to advertise in your admirable journal—

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which will be done indeed, that goes without saying—without that we might as well stay at home—but to engage your interest, to bring behind us the big force—the Big Force you are—that's another thing altogether. I hope we may look for that. That would be worth to us—well, money is a vulgar thing; but the best efforts are the equivalent of money. They earn money, sir. That is their reward. I hope we may look for that, too."

"My paper has a trust to its readers. We are proud that we do not lead them astray . . ."

"That is just my point, and . . . but I interrupted you, sir."

"It is for you to continue indeed. You didn't say yet what it was, you remember, might prove so interesting."

"Too true. Your quick practical mind again. As usual practical. I wished—that is to say, I desired to engage your interest as I ventured to say. Busy men—we're all busy men—want to know how they're affected—the particular in the general advantage, as—who was it that said that? I took the liberty of having it all drawn up in these papers for your perusal—your perusal and consideration. It concerns deposits of great value, so I don't state their location here. I'm an engineer myself—received my training under the great K."

It was at this point that Patrick Bronty entered. He had a bag in his hand, and was due apparently to leave for Liverpool that night. Our visitor was in the middle of his explanations, and Bronty had well entered before he stopped.

"I didn't note you were engaged. I wanted to see you before I went. I'll come again."

He was at the door before Jeremiah stopped him.

"You could stay. You could help us in this. . . . Not interrupting you."

Our visitor peered at each of us; then more slowly continued his explanations. The affair afterwards got

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some notoriety, and need not be referred to here. Whether there were any deposits as he said, proved to be a question indeed. Such things sound very gay in their recital, and the chances of mistake, one may assume, are many. It was when he mentioned the interested parties that we turned to hear Bronty's voice.

"Englishmen all," he said.

"Excellent men," said the other, not hearing the hostility that made me uncomfortable. "Alert men, I may say."

"Who prospected the ground?"

"I myself, I may say. I went over the whole ground most carefully."

"And you're promoting. That's enough."

I looked anxiously at Jeremiah, and was not pleased at the light in his eyes. But he betrayed nothing. He gathered up the other's papers, and said he would communicate with him later.

When the visitor had gone his way, Bronty, who had not moved in his chair all the time, spoke again.

"That's a known type,"² he said. "He thinks we're a lot of prize idiots."

Jeremiah stood by his desk stiff and straight saying nothing. So I rushed in, less to justify anything than to avert the storm that pended.

"Hurried conclusions come out of prejudice, maybe. There's no good in that sort of thing, anyway. This might prove true enough."

"It might in truth. Did you ever hear of the chance that would set us all eating lark-pies?"

"There's no good to be got out of talking like that."

"What's your interest in this, Hare?"

Bronty's tone was challenging, and Jeremiah's reply was to turn and look at him. There was no anger in his reply. There was more. There was calculation, and that, with Jeremiah, was an infinitely more threatening thing.

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"You're a Fenian, aren't you?"

"That name's as good as another, and a deal more honourable than most. It's a name for which you give, not a name by which you get. There aren't a heap of such names passing around. But has that anything to do with it?"

"Sure. It has a great deal to do with it. My boy Diarmuid is coming into this business I've made for him, to look at hard facts for what they are, and on that same hard foundation, mind you, to build it out and up to a much bigger thing than I've time for. How do you suppose he's going to be fit to do that if you put fancy glasses over his eyes till he can't see facts at all except in one or two colours and one or two patterns?"

The dreaded words had been spoken, and the two men faced one another—Jeremiah standing, Bronty sitting. Jeremiah's eyes were hard and fearless like those of a hawk, and as destitute of emotion. After his first sudden look of surprise and anger Patrick Bronty's face became mask-like again, and his eyes lustreless and dead. Yet I was sure all the time that he was shaken by a storm of emotion that he did not permit within the circle of his attention.

"Well?" he said, after what had seemed an age of silence.

"I asked you a question."

"It was just a flourish, the same question. No harm to a flourish; but you're aiming with some purpose. What is it?"

Like a feather of wind on a lake, a smile passed over Jeremiah's face before it set hard.

"Is it worth while explaining the same flourish, or to spell out the letters of my meaning?"

"That's for you to say indeed. I suppose you didn't begin this just for puzzlement."

"How would it be to say that you're loading my boy against this place, against his home, and against me?"

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Bronty's face broke into a look of utter astonishment. His eyes flamed with anger. He turned about on Jeremiah and half rose from his chair. And then this astonishing man was as he had been before, as if his will were a steel spring the wrench of which brought his body to the control he had ordained. Only he now perceptibly trembled as he spoke.

"The man that said that . . . well, he lied."

"Did he?" Jeremiah said, the firmer now of the two. "I'm glad to hear that. But you're talking of intentions; I'm talking of results. Intentions are interesting bye-ways, do you know. They always come back to the high-road again, and I'll wait for them there. Do you deny the results are as I say?"

"Well, get on with it." The despair and fatigue in Bronty's voice surprised one greatly.

"You're not denying it."

"I neither am nor am not. You're talking of things I don't know, one way or the other. And you'll please to say now what all this is about before I walk out of that door."

"That fool that left me was my business. You cut in, not understanding. This business is my business, and Diarmuid is my boy. No harm for you to recognise that, too, and leave it so. If you like walking the country, do so, but choose older company without making it an occasion for leaving fancy glasses in the way of a boy whose business is to use his own eyes, skin them well, and find out things for himself. That's what I mean. It has been on my mind for some time to say that, but you have it now."

"I see," Bronty said, and rose slowly to his feet to face Jeremiah. "I wonder if you know how greatly wide of the mark you are. However, you'll find out in the course of time. You didn't ask me for any help in what, if I don't mistake, is going to be a queer turn-out for you. You just left your dread at my door. Good, then. I'm not complain-

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ing. There's many a thing I could complain of this minute, with good cause if with poor effect; but I'm not the complaining sort any more than you. I'll talk over what you said with Diarmuid, and explain things to him."

"What reason have you for talking with the boy at all?" It was painful to see the fear betrayed by Jeremiah's manner as he spoke, though it was only manifest in a sudden rigidity.

"Diarmuid is my good friend, whose opinion is as much to me as mine is ever likely to be to him for all your foolish dread. You don't suppose I put off my friends without explanation like an old coat. I leave that to others."

"Well, have it so. The stream'll flow clean again yet, and it'll flow straight. That's the main thing."

"Diarmuid, you mean? He'll flow as he was evermore set to flow, and neither you nor I will change him. And since you're so fond of rivers, maybe you'll let me tell you by the same token that he'll flow a good deal faster after this day. I could give you a good reason for that, too; but it'd be wasted on you I doubt."

"Well, leave it so. I'll try it out. . . . You're going to Liverpool to-night?"

"I was."

"It's not six yet."

"I know that. I'm finished with Liverpool. I'm finished here."

I sprang to my feet in alarm. This was turning out to be a serious business. But Jeremiah was quite cool.

"Because of this business?" he said.

"Not the way you think. Not the way you'd understand. I'm going just to satisfy myself that all this," he indicated the office at large, "cannot hold me—that I'm free of it all. I've been thinking of it for a while now. You'd be surprised where I learnt

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it. But other things held me back, that you've now conveniently scattered. That's all."

"But those tins and bottles are yours, if they're anybody's."

"I know. I give them to you. They were only an accident in my life. They're all in yours. So they're yours by right of inclination, which is the only right, and perhaps the only law. Good-night."

5.

Jeremiah broke the long silence between us by saying :

"Idiots like that who don't know the right way to say and do things only do themselves harm. They haven't their trade learnt right, and the result is that nobody trusts them. Couldn't you see from the way he spoke that he didn't expect anybody to trust him? That's because he didn't study the use of his tools—the tools being men and women, do you know. There's no art about a man like that; there's just cleverness. There are a lot of people in this country who mistake cunning for brains. Sure. As if the world was a District Council."

I looked at him first in amazement. Then it came upon me that he was referring, not to Bronty, but to our earlier visitor, whom I had completely forgotten. That amazed me still more. One had difficulty in thinking of that uncouth figure in face of the tragic exit from our life we had just witnessed.

"You mean our visitor?" I said with some distaste.

"Sure," came the calm reply.

"You're not going to get yourself involved with him, are you?"

"Involved with him? You may be sure I'm not going to be involved with him. But that's not to say he's going to escape me. Didn't he come trying to snare me? Well, we'll try the bout out between us."

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"I wouldn't trust that man unless I tested him pretty severely."

"I wouldn't trust any man till I'd tested him pretty severely, my dear man."

"He looks a thorough sharper, and acts like one."

"Isn't that what I say? He learnt his trade wrong; or rather he didn't learn it at all. No man would employ the best carpenter in the world if he handled his saw like a reaping-hook. That's my great advantage over him."

"Do you really think, Jeremiah," I said, revolted by the strange cynicism I heard, "that any credit is to be got by association with that man?" So I argued with him, and so I protested.

Jeremiah struck the desk violently—violently. I looked earnestly at him, startled by his violence. He was like a man very deeply moved. It seemed to me that he had turned aside from Bronty to our visitor to withhold himself from his own emotions. Pity came into my mind with that thought, but what could I do? For he challenged me before him.

"Credit?" he cried. "What is that? Will you bring it out before me till I look at it? Is there anything in the world but it? and yet look at it for what it is. What makes your fine gentleman kick the newsboy off the curb for begging? Credit. What makes one sleep warm and the other cold? Credit. What fills the belly of one with food and the other with wind? Credit. And will you look at this credit, in the name of goodness? Haven't I credit? If I went down to the Commercial Buildings there, and told them that I'd made my money by robbing the poor, do you think would I lose my credit? Or would I get twice as much more? Or if I stood up on any altar steps to confess I made my money from swindling, but I'd build a church with't, or open a park, to put it right. Would my money be refused, or I lose my credit? Or would they make me a saint on the spot? That's credit. There's envy, do you know.

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But that's credit, too. If you're an ass and have money you've credit. The credit at the bank is the credit of virtue, William, and while you've one you'll hold the other. If my association with any person brings me money, it'll bring me credit, and if it doesn't it won't. . . . 'Tis no use your shaking your head. You're just the same as any other person. I didn't ask the world to be made that way. I came into it when 'twas made so, and I set about to learn the ways of it in a hard enough school. If there were shins on my mind they'd bear many a bruise yet I don't doubt. But I learnt my lesson, and if I didn't set half Ireland drunk, and if I didn't give it Stephen's Green, I got my own share of credit, too. Mole-eyes, that was in here, won't strip me of it, though he may likely help me to more."

I was silent for a while, for he had spoken with strange exasperation. Then I spoke with the tenderness he had awoken in me.

"I don't like to hear you speak like that, Jeremiah. I don't indeed."

"I know you don't," he said more kindly. "You're tender-minded yet. I don't say but I had other thoughts in my head once myself; but men and women, of all coats and habits, taught me the common agreement. You're just the same, do you know. What you didn't like about our friend was the shine on his trousers. But you were wrong. That came of his habit of crossing and uncrossing his legs, not because he couldn't afford a new pair. You didn't like his skifty manner. But that was because he had failed once or twice pretty badly, or because his father had, and because he hadn't made enough money to be able to look the world straight in the eyes. It was the good in him you didn't like, not the bad—taking the good and the bad by your own reckoning. It's from men just like you I learnt my lesson. You mightn't believe it, but I'd have cried many a time with the wish that it wasn't so. But I put that under my foot,

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so I did, in fine style. For it's facts, William, that count. It's what you see with your two eyes, and they well skinned, not what you dream in your dreams. These dreams are the tools the few use over the many; and I'd rather the shank of the tool in my hand than the point of it in my stern."

"And what about Patrick Bronty, then?" I asked.

His face clouded, and his fist closed suddenly as in pain; but he drew himself erect.

"Ah, he'll return, you'll find."

"And what if he doesn't?"

"If he doesn't, he doesn't then. We can't afford to look backward. Who's for home?"

CHAPTER ELEVEN

I.

I HAD written a few letters the following Saturday evening, and was coming down to take my place in the family circle when Diarmuid entered. Indeed, I was crossing the hall to the sitting-room door when the hall-door was pushed open and he came in frowning against the light. I greeted him and asked if he had had a good walk, but his frown against the light turned to dark thunder of a frown against me. Instantly my thought fled to the memory that Patrick Brontë had that day doubtless taken farewell of the boy, and as it did so I heard him say :

“Come in, sir; come in.”

Aeneas O'Maille entered after him; and I disappeared into the sitting-room.

The evening was warm in late summer, but, sultry as the air was, the spiritual temperature was sultrier. I suspect that Diarmuid was under strict orders, for he said nothing all the evening, though his glance constantly travelled toward his master, on whose commanding face the sunlight of an inward smile constantly sat. In truth, to say that he said nothing would be to tell half the tale. There are silences that are the absence of sound, and there are silences that are like the spears of a host. Not to his father's greeting nor to his mother's inquiry made he any answer, but sat at once to his supper, leaving Helen to care for his visitor. Of nothing did he remind me so much as of a thunder-cloud ready to burst. But it did not burst. That was just its menace. His meal was a mere pretence. He swallowed but half his cocoa, and strode out of the

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room. I expected the door to slam violently. I awaited it with fear. Instead of which it closed softly and firmly. Often afterwards I remembered the soft, firm closing of the door that night.

Helen, too, had expected the door to slam. Her wince was ready, and her relief surprised. She turned with an amused smile to Aeneas O'Maille.

"Will you tell me what's the matter with Jerry this evening?" she said.

"Isn't that what brought me in?" he answered. Nothing could disturb the happy temper of this man. Charged the spiritual temperature might have been with tempest, yet his own spirit was calm where mine was anxious. He looked over toward Jeremiah. "Padraic . . . Padraic Bronty, that is, . . . was talking to me yesterday," he added.

"Do you tell me?" Jeremiah answered. Clearly he was ready for what was coming.

"He spoke to Diarmuid to-day. And there was a storm. The very devil of a storm. I think you did Padraic a great injustice. I think you do him an injustice this very minute."

"That's likely. You cannot move without doing some injustice. You can only expect to get certain things done that you judge necessary. You may be altogether wrong, but you get to the end that you decide you will, the end you think worth while, and that's enough till the next thing comes along."

"That's true, too. But it's not all, sir. It's only a little piece. You couldn't hold a boys' school together without getting to the inward of justice. And the world's only a school of children and adolescents, do you know. The greatest thing to get done, after all, isn't it only to get mortals to cohere instead of to break asunder in violence? And what is justice but just that inward secret of coherence? Anyway, I wish you could have heard Padraic standing up for you to-day against your own son."

Jeremiah's eyes were worth study then. Many

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emotions were mixed there, something like fear being one of them; but no man who was not truly great could have softened so tenderly at the rebuke he received. Yet he did not flinch from his purpose.

"He'd do that, too, I believe," he said. "I wouldn't doubt him. No fault about the man. It's the creed that has the man mastered I rule out. Don't mistake me there. His creed's his own concern, and his opinion his own business, but when he starts loading my boy's mind with them, who has got to find out things for himself for quite a different class of life, then it's time for me to say a word, do you know."

"What creed's that?"

Aeneas O'Maille was wary, keen even, quite unlike his ordinary self; and Jeremiah was disarmingly frank, as always under such searching.

"He's a Fenian, isn't he?"

"Do you mean generally, or particularly?"

"Oh well, I amn't prying into secrets. That's his affair anyway. Sure. I mean he's a man that lives for his hate. It makes up his life. Wasn't he glad to get out of our business to follow out the other? I won't say a word against that either. I had a share of it one time myself, though of a different sort, and it's as good a tool as another. But it's not the tool that's going to help Diarmuid build up what I've made for him, all the same. Don't I know well? There's not a man in Ireland outside myself could have found out the fine business man Bronty is, and held him to it, in spite of this madness he has for banging his head against every stone wall down the road . . . not every stone wall, but the one stone wall all the time. And when I found the madness was infectious for my boy . . . well, then 'twas time for me to say one sharp word and stop it."

"I wonder," said O'Maille with the same keenness, "you don't know how far from the mark you are. Well, well. Why, sir, would you believe it

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was you put the boy on the track? It was, indeed. And it was Padraic who championed you and put difficulties in his way. I couldn't understand it myself, till Padraic said Ireland had need of your sort of man to give her hardness and worldly confidence; and as for Diarmuid, said he, he wouldn't give a twig for a man who fell into his principles like a babe into a soft bed the way most of our people do. Would that surprise you now?"

That it did surprise Jeremiah was plain to see. His surprise gave Helen an opportunity to intervene.

"What do you mean, that we put Diarmuid on the track? I don't think we ever discussed politics in this house."

O'Maille turned to her with a sunny smile.

"Well, ma'am, maybe that's something of it, too. There are things more remarkable than speech. You didn't put him wrong anyway; that I do believe. But that's for you to settle with Diarmuid; and that you'll have to do sometime, you'll allow me to say. . . . It was about Padraic I came. That, and to prevent ructions till the lad's cooler." He had turned to Jeremiah again. "Don't mistake me. Padraic goes to America in a week or so. I wished you not to be in any mistake about him before he went. I'd like you to meet indeed."

"What's he going to America for?" Jeremiah asked with sharp interest.

"Ah, just private business."

"Couldn't he go for the company?"

"He's out of that now. He'll not go back to that. I think he's right too, seeing the kind of man he is. But he was hurt to the soul, so he was, at the suggestion that he was winning your son away from you. You suggested something of that sort, I believe. He's not that sort, the same Padraic. He's the soul of honour. I wanted to make that right, because I thought he wanted it, though he didn't

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say anything about it. I knew well you'd wish me to come, seeing what was in my mind."

He rose to go, and Jeremiah went slowly after him. I thought every moment that Jeremiah would call him back, for it was plain he was deeply moved.

I was watching Jeremiah when I heard an exclamation from the opened door. We all turned about. There in the warm shaded light from the room outlined against the clear light of the hall stood Diarmuid in his night-suit. He was looking past his master at his father. He stood there like a clear direct challenge, and his fists were clenched at the end of the arms that dropped by his side.

2.

Aeneas O'Maille put his arm about the boy's shoulder and drew him into the room, but it was Helen who first spoke. Never till then had I heard that tone of anger in her veins.

"What were you doing at that door, Jerry?"

It is impossible that Diarmuid heard her, for he stood still looking at his father. A glance so intent, so meaningful, framed in an attitude so rigid, should have been hostile; but it was, in fact, far more than that. It was searching . . . expectant even. So might a jungle animal have awaited the lunge of its foe. For his part Jeremiah was unreadable, as always in places of difficulty. He stood erect, with a dignity unapproachable, his eye kindly measuring the boy beneath him.

Helen changed her question.

"Diarmuid, were you listening at that door?"

"I was."

It seemed minutes before that answer came. Diarmuid did not turn towards her as he spoke. His words might have been an accusation directed towards his father.

"Jerry, I'm ashamed of you."

With what bitter disappointment were those words

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spoken. Little wonder that the lad turned toward the speaker.

"Weren't you speaking about me and my friends?"

"That has nothing to do with it."

"Weren't you speaking about me and my friends, and I away out of it?"

"I say that that has nothing to do with it. To listen at doors is a dirty dishonourable act; and I'm ashamed, ashamed to my heart, that a son of mine should have been guilty of such an act."

The boy's face flushed a little, but he held his ground.

"And what is it to talk about people behind their backs? Hadn't I got to find out what you were saying?"

"You could have come direct to us about it."

The sudden searching light that leapt in his eyes spoke his answer, but, lest it should require it, I suppose, he spoke it with his lips, too, at length.

"You wouldn't have talked then. You'd have talked about something else."

"Then, Jerry, it wouldn't have been right for you to know . . ."

"I had to know . . ."

"And to stand listening unknown at keyholes is a shameful act."

"I didn't. I waited till I was found."

We all started at his words. One heard that start distinctly break the tensivity. I looked across at Aeneas O'Maille, who stood beside the lad looking down at him, and understood the love that shone out in his regard.

Another also apparently had noticed that regard, for I heard Helen behind me speak again.

"Do you approve of this, Mr. O'Maille?" she asked, rather unpleasantly indeed.

"I neither approve nor disapprove, ma'am; I'm just beginning to understand," said that imperturbable man.

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"Well, now, I neither approve nor do I disapprove, but I think I understand very well," Jeremiah said, speaking for the first time. In spite of his words his manner was strained, and even pugnacious. "I might have done the same myself, let us say, and so amn't inclined to blame you for being the son of your father. You wanted to find out, and you found out, and you didn't run away. But now that you did find out, where are we? What's this you have to say now? Come now, Diarmuid O'Hara, let's hear you."

Oh, the infinite tragedy, the reconciled despair, I seemed to hear at the bottom of these words. They darkened my mind with a sorrow beyond tears. But the son answered the father, speaking with low confused words that tumbled over one another.

"You were wrong. You were wrong. You didn't know, and you couldn't know. You couldn't. I know, because I was finding out from him what I wanted to know, I was. It wasn't Padraic influencing me, but I finding out from him. And he doesn't hate. That's . . . that's not true. Let me tell you. Didn't I see him standing up in the mountains looking out to the sea? 'Ireland, Ireland, God made you very beautiful,' he said. 'He made you very beautiful. He didn't make you beautiful but to be free. He didn't give you beauty to be drawn weeping behind an empire's chariot.' You remember that, sir?"

"I do, indeed; I remember very well," said Aeneas O'Maille.

"And he wasn't showing off, was he?"

"I'm very sure he wasn't."

"Well, he was crying anyway, and a man doesn't cry to show off. And he doesn't cry, and he doesn't talk like that, if he . . . if he . . . if he lives for his hate, the way you said he did. He doesn't. That's how I know you're wrong, if it wasn't that I just know. . . . What would you cry for, father?"

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Such a question—and weighted with such monstrous accusation. Yet Jeremiah did not lose patience, though in the raillery of his reply there was bitterness, too.

“I got all my crying over early, Diarmuid O’Hara. Your father’s not that sort now, whatever the quality of the tears.”

“And Padraic isn’t that sort either.”

“Jerry, what do you mean asking your father such questions?” Helen interposed sharply.

“Leave him be,” ruled Jeremiah tolerantly. “Maybe I was wrong about him,” he continued, speaking to Diarmuid. “I’ll admit perhaps I was. I wanted to do something for your good—and it was for your good, as you’ll find out yet—and it’s quite likely I’d mix it up with other things. So let us admit I misjudged him. But what I told him about you is true, and is my word on that matter—though,” he added, turning to O’Maille, “for him to sheer out of the business, and leave the country, is simply silly. It’s to act the like of a child.”

“He’s going to America to work for Ireland,” Diarmuid said, speaking still with passionate intensity. “I know. I heard him say so. And he was right to leave the business. I told him so all along, didn’t I?”

“Certainly you said something about it,” O’Maille corroborated.

“I told him there were enough to make money, and he ought to work for Ireland. I told him you worked for money, and never once talked about Ireland, and that he’d be the same way. It was easy to work for money like every other person, but it was hard to give up everything for Ireland, and he was meant to be hard and fine like the heroes that died. I don’t want him to go back to the business. I don’t want him to stay with me. I want him to go away and work, whatever it is wants doing, and

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to be hard and true and to sleep anywhere and to be fine, all because of Ireland that nobody thinks about or talks about, because it was easy to be thinking of making money for yourself instead of giving yourself away for something that was great and not to care? That's how the heroes were, the men that died for Ireland; and everybody says they were fine and great, and hangs up pictures of them, even if nobody does what they said. And that's only because they know in themselves what the right thing must be, whatever they do, and however beastly they are."

His words rushed over themselves into silence, a silence that found him flushed and breathless, half afraid of his own unbosoming.

For all the extravagance of his tumultuous words I was rebuked. I glanced aside at Jeremiah, and to my wonder I saw that his eyes had avoided his son's glance and were moist and troubled. Almost it seemed to me that the whole man were in shadow. Yet his voice, when at length he spoke, was hard—unnaturally hard.

"I see," he said. "And is that all you waited to say?"

Diarmuid hung his head and made no reply. He shivered a little there in his night-shirt, and moved up against O'Maille as if to touch the warmth of his body.

"Well, then, you can now go back to your bed."

I wondered if the others rebelled against Jeremiah as I did then, for not a hint of kindness warmed that dry hard voice, no emotion urged the command. Yet who knows what deeps might not have been sounded but for that dryness—dryness as of a fiddle played in the uppermost registers?

The effect on Diarmuid was instant. He drew himself erect, and sought his father's averted eyes with cold hostility. Then he turned and went from the room without a word.

The silence that sat uneasily on us all was broken

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by Helen as she moved round the table toward the door. But Jeremiah's voice checked her, too.

"Where are you going?"

She did not reply. She looked in silence across the room, graciously deferring, but perfect of dignity.

"Leave him with himself. He'll want that."

Then the dry hard voice, that wasted as few words as it did emotion, turned its attention to Aeneas O'Maille, who all this time had stood near Jeremiah surveying him with fearless and grave astonishment.

"How long will it be before he matriculates?"

"Diarmuid? Faith, I don't know. Not long now maybe. Why?"

"Well, no reflections on anybody. No criticisms, for that matter. But the sooner he goes up to his university, seeing he's supposed to go there, the better. Better for everyone. He'll have to make up his mind for himself, no doubt. Say so, anyway. But the sooner he has to face the facts of life the better for himself. 'Tis too long delayed already . . . for him."

3.

It was very late that night before I heard Jeremiah pass my door for bed. Yet I made no reference to that night's proceedings, even though I heard from Patrick Bronty's assistant, who now took his place in the laboratory, that our sometime colleague had removed all his property. The same assistant wished to know from me what permanent arrangements were to be made; but I had not the heart to speak to Jeremiah. Neither had I the courage, for Jeremiah's constant brevity and constraint were not encouraging.

Then one evening, as we sat at work, Jeremiah spoke to me. He had signed his letters, and sat before his empty desk. I was expecting his summons for home when he turned to me.

I had cause to know my friend very well. His

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open eyes looked straight at me without a flutter, his brows bent and his gaze intent. His voice was cold, its tones level, and his manner casual enough. Did he seek to mask from men an emotion he dared not trust, or did he gravely solicit my aid in making discussable a theme otherwise too near for speech? Yet he struck instantly to the theme without approach.

"By the way, William," he said, "did it ever occur to you that this Diarmuid O'Hara of ours likes you?"

"Likes me? What makes you think that?"

"It did, then. Did he ever confide in you? For I don't know any other person in whom he might . . . not even his master."

"He did come to me once. It was a while ago, I believe. He wanted, I suppose, to talk to me about things in general . . . about Patrick Bronty in fact. He said I hated him, or something of that sort."

"So you did, too. He saw that, did he? Myself kept you decently civil to the man for a long time, do you know. I don't remember your giving him much time to remark it."

"Of course, you understand, Jeremiah, I couldn't give away his confidence. Not very properly, could I? Anyway, that was a while ago, and he didn't come to me since. That was just a chance."

"Ay, just a chance. Just a chance. The thing was there, but the chance didn't come since because you didn't put yourself in the way of it, your mind being away other places. That likely enough."

He was silent for a few minutes, but he still, if I may put it so, had all his attention ordered in the front of his mind to mask whatever emotions might have been astir behind.

"It's like this, William. I'm after searching up some of my own memories. Queer things, memories, do you know. I couldn't find myself talking to anybody near to me, and I was shy of those far from me, but those midway and betwixt I might have taken a

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shot at if they came apt and easy and weren't troublesome. Even so it wasn't easy. I found my own fodder and eat it alone. You might have thought I preferred it so; and ne'er a doubt everyone thought me that sort of a person; but I was vexed with the whole world because I hadn't one for a friend. Crying for someone to talk to, I was; and the thronged full world was the loneliest place because of all the people in it. I mightn't have spoken to anyone, indeed, supposing they came along. But devil a come. . . . You're wondering at me now?"

I confessed my wonder, but I did not confess my greater wonder at hearing such intimate matter delivered in so hard and cynical a manner.

"You needn't wonder then. That's just to let you know that I wasn't the first in time that way, and it's clear I won't be the last. No doubt, you think Diarmuid O'Hara an odd unnatural kind of a boy."

"I do not think him unnatural indeed. Not unnatural, Jeremiah. Perhaps even more than ordinarily natural, if that can be. But no doubt he's odd. Don't you think he's odd?"

"He is not odd, and he's not unnatural. I know well what's going on inside of him. He's going wrong, and we've got to save him, but he's not even odd. Sure. He's just alone, and finding his own fodder, and finding it all wrong because of the company he has been keeping. We've got to find him company, do you see, without being troublesome."

"I see. Well, of course, I'm willing to do everything I can to help, though I doubt if I can do much. I'd like very much to believe he would confide in me, but these things don't fall out the way you wish them. Can you suggest anything? For I suppose you want me to be the company."

"Sure. Can't you see I'm too near? That's all that's wrong there. We'd be the very same in his

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case . . . distant and strange with those we have most in our minds. The very same. Did you ever think you were born to be a midway and betwixt person? Because you were."

I laughed, though there was no laughter in the intentness that negotiated with me.

"Was I? It's good to be of some use in the world, isn't it?"

"There aren't many of that use, you may wager your last penny. There's something . . . but no matter. Anyway, Diarmuid O'Hara likes you . . . that's to say, he'd talk to you."

"I wonder now. Are you so sure of that?"

"Sure. I know; and when a person knows, he knows, and there's an end of it. What I'd do, he'd do; and I never talked to another but to you. Only you'd have to put yourself apt to him as chance put you apt to me, don't you see. He'd talk to you of things he wouldn't talk of to any other, not even to his master or to Bronty."

"Supposing you're right, there's another thing. You know me well enough to know I couldn't take a confidence to break it."

"Did you really think I meant that? I want you to help him, not to help me, not to do wrong by him or me. He's going astray with a deal of nonsense, and I want you to get him back to facts. He has a great mind for facts, if he saw them. None better. Don't I know him? And you know what facts are. That's all. It's not dreams will change the world, but facts, for there's nothing in the world but facts."

4.

We spoke a good deal more that evening, and I resolved to try and win Diarmuid's confidence. My resolve was stiffened by something that came to my knowledge shortly afterwards.

It was a sunlit Sunday morning. Jeremiah had taken the car after Mass, turning up past Ranelagh

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to discuss some business matter with a friend. Helen and I, therefore, walked home together along Rathmines, with a scarf of mist shrouding the hills before us at the end of sight. Martin was away somewhere; Diarmuid, with a couple of his school friends, walked ahead of us.

In the midst of other talk Helen, without preparation as without emphasis, suddenly said :

"Do you remember, by the way, William, what I told you once about Jeremiah?"

"Could I forget anything you ever said to me?" I made reply. "But you must give me more particular reminder."

There was a shade of asperity in her rejoinder.

"You remember at the time of that ridiculous legal affair in London. I came to your room."

I looked round at her in amazement, and exclaimed : "You mean these terrible dreams of his?"

"Well, I do, but not for Rathmines to hear." I was properly rebuked. I bowed my head and murmured an apology as she continued : "I wish I knew about those early days of his life. I ought to know. I suppose I should ask him, but something seems always to forbid me, and so I don't. I simply don't, and so I'm helpless, for it's easy to see those days meant a very great deal to Jeremiah. Would you think I was talking like a heroine in a book if I said that no woman ever had a better husband than I?"

"I should think you were talking like the Helen Hare of my deepest respect."

She smiled. A rare beautiful smile illumined her grave dignity.

"I know exactly what you mean, and you're right. He is all that. And would you say, William, that the wife is to the husband as the husband to the wife?"

"My dear, dear Helen, it would be hard to say which eclipsed the other."

"You are wrong, then. I sometimes think there is no wife to the husband. Not in any real sense,

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that's to say. Can't you see that all the secret motives of his life are kept from me? I cannot help when most I should . . . if that were all . . . but I even tip-toe about the edge of his real life like an intruder. Like an intruder, William. Not only can't I help, but I can't even explain to myself the things that puzzle me. Those who could help me keep me outside . . . resentfully outside."

I knew her reference was to me; though what should make her credit me with a knowledge that I had withheld securely against all comers, troubled me exceedingly. She knew that Jeremiah could not have told me, for she herself had just confessed that his mind automatically closed all approaches to that secret house. How then could I know? But she had sounded quite another alarm in me.

"You don't mean to suggest that he's having those dreams again now?" I asked.

"Suggest or say, what does it matter? Oh, I don't mean that they shake him as they did before . . . though perhaps they affect him more deeply. And I don't mean that he never dreamt since, or that he never dreamt . . . those dreams. I could mostly tell from his manner in the morning, even from the very way he dressed, that he had had a troubled night. Let me tell you a secret. Once I willed him to tell me about his dreams. I sat looking at him from behind, willing him, trying to get my will into the movement of his mind, and his mind into the movement of my will. Do you think that strange? But I made up my mind to find out, you see. And then he said to me without turning round: 'Do you ever get one dream over and over again for years and years?' I pretended to think, and then asked him if he meant only one dream, like one story, or a number changing and mixing. 'I don't know about one or many; it's like one face in a hundred different hats, and the hats don't so much matter, but the face does.' Wasn't it strange how he answered me? But

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then I asked him if it was a dream or a memory, and I knew at once he wasn't going to answer again. He didn't. He began telling me a dream he had read somewhere, of a leprechaun who came to one house every day for a year, each day in a different hat, till the man of the house didn't know whether he was most in dread of the one horrible face or the hundred horrible hats. Some nonsense like that. I wonder if he knew he was trying to stop letting me know, for I never succeeded again. But those were dreams that didn't try to break out of his sleep, like an animal trying to break out of a cage, not like those of which I told you before, or those now."

"You don't know how much you distress me." I felt like a man idly wringing his hands as he watched a drowning.

"You don't suppose that I'm not distressed, do you? It's I that hear him, and my nights that are wakeful, William. And I might be able to do a very great deal to help him, if I could only get a key to what it all meant."

Meanly I fenced her again: "Is it as bad now as you described it before?"

"It is not. But it's deeper, if you can understand me. It seems more sorrowful and more forlorn. That's while he's dreaming, and speaking to himself. And the effect is longer. Did you notice how late he is before he goes to bed each night?"

At the moment I was noticing quite another thing. Something about the rigidity of Diarmuid's head had caught my attention; and I noticed that he was detached from his companions. They were ahead of him. He was listening. He was like a scout going carefully with every faculty awake. And as Helen concluded he turned and looked at her—a penetrating, inquisitorial, yet almost triumphant look, no mere glance, but long sustained.

Helen was turned toward me, and did not notice him. But she followed the line of my warning glance.

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"We'll go straight home, dear boy," she said.

"Right ho, mother," he replied, rejoining his companions.

He knew of whom we had been speaking. The glance Helen and I exchanged shewed me that we both shared that one thought. What did that enigmatic, half-triumphant gaze of his mean, before which she had so manifestly bowed, as it were, in acceptance? How long had he been listening? How much had he heard? Plainly he had been caught involuntarily—had been noosed by a stray word that one of us had let slip, and had been led captive by some inward interest of his own.

Anyway, Helen and I did not revert to the subject, bearing our oppression apart till we could share it more freely.

CHAPTER TWELVE

I.

It was one thing to have Fate planning to place one at certain critical passages in the life of this household. It was quite another to go forth in search of knowledge. It may, to be sure, have been just a single man's folly to think that one had been placed at those critical passages. No harm, anyway, to make that claim, though how far Fate had any hand in the business is a question that cannot so easily be decided. One could only see a little here, and a little there, and patch these into the general plan of the whole that one saw very well indeed. The vast ground that lay at the back of these phantom appearances one could only divine; and I never asked to know more than Time and my gracious destiny placed at my disposal. I often felt, indeed, that I knew more of what I could not see than if all had been expressed before me. Yet now I was setting out, urged by a duty I could not avoid, to bring within my knowledge what I would rather have accepted without protest.

Nevertheless, it was my duty. It was not merely that Helen, in a conversation I contrived to snatch with her later that week, told me a strange tale of Jeremiah's unhappy nights. Perhaps there was no more in that than my own fancy imported—or than her own colour gave, in her desire to alarm me into revealing that I knew what it all meant. But Jeremiah was before me every day; and that was enough.

How shall I describe what I saw, without drawing on what later was revealed? He said little; he seemed in truth to avoid speech; and so there were no words

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to unlock his brain. Whatever the early unhappy world into which he escaped in his sleep, while awake he revealed no knowledge of it. Possibly the guard on his lips was more closely kept, less now a bonny avoidance than a steadfast silence; but that was all. Silence may portend a world of meaning, but it is hard to tell what that meaning is when the alphabet is lacking. So there was nothing to be read from his silence, except that it was strange to see him bear about for such long spells a silence quite so grim. It was unusual. It was not like the man.

Of his manner the same may be said. When he had been troubled by his dreams before—when the outer world of circumstance had broken phials in the inner world of memory—his manner had been violent, challenging, rebellious. There was nothing of this now. Now he was cool and collected. Yet that was just it. He never relaxed. He never relented, or laid the armour by that cased him at all hours. He had not now the breadth of view or abandon of strength by which he had hewn his way through earlier years, for these things are always refreshed by hours of lassitude, and during this time his strength was constantly absorbed by the affairs that circled round him.

Partly this was the result of advancing years no doubt; but advancing years will not account for so sudden a narrowing of interest. Besides, his eyes had another tale to tell me, especially now that they had taken to watching Diarmuid closely, when he thought himself unobserved.

There was in his eyes that which I had never thought to have discovered in Jeremiah Hare. There was Fear. There was a fear that sometimes amounted almost to a dislike, and it changed the whole aspect of the man's face. More often there was a fear that amounted to resentment. And then again it was just fear, like the shadow of a dark wing across the mind on which those portals opened.

Of what was he afraid? Diarmuid was his

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favourite, his trusted one, for all their mis-appointments. Diarmuid O'Hara, he never failed to call him, in furtive and tender memory. What did he see in this boy advancing through the years, or what did he see above him or around him, that awoke this fear? That it was something from his early days was apparent from the nature of his dreams. Whatever it was, it was something that, whether he knew it or not, was with him constantly; and I was resolved to discover what it was. He himself had asked me to be a guide to Diarmuid, and to win his confidence; and his request was my command; but he now urged me with an authority unconceivably winning.

For Fear (not the fear of Fear, as before, but the actual Fear itself) in Jeremiah was intolerable and uncanny. The life of our household had been a landlocked sea; but it now became the mysterious ocean with its horizons. And as it was clear that the unriddling of the mystery lay in Diarmuid, it was therefore to Diarmuid I turned with the determination not to spare myself in the enquiry.

2.

Never a man of violent speeds, I always found opportunity a graceful conspirator. For who would mount to pluck, wry-mouthed, the apples of his desire when if they will not ripen they cannot come to good? And with a character so wilful as Diarmuid I had need to conspire, and to be conspired with, if my apples were not to prove too much for my taste. Let busy persons say what they will, but watchful leisure is a well-spent thrift; and so I proved.

For in his twenty-first year Martin took his degree and came into the offices in Dame Street, and Diarmuid began to read for his matriculation. I look at my books with affection, but I admit that the occasion deserved the irony with which Jeremiah greeted it.

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"Will you tell me what kind of sense is in that?" he said. "I think they have me half-caught, with their nonsense and their humbug and the feathers in their hats. There's Martin only learning now what he might have learned five years ago, and thinking he has nothing to learn at all, because, if you please, he's a Bachelor of Arts. Bachelor of Arts! Did you ever hear anything like that in all your life? I suppose you agree with that?"

"I do." I stoutly defended Helen's cause. "Every person should have a good education these times."

"I wasn't talking about a good education. I was talking about a Bachelor of Arts. A good education is got with finding out the shape of the world. A Bachelor of Arts is got by forgetting both shape and colour. They're at opposite ends, man. And he tells me, proud as a stage-player, that he intends going on till he becomes a Master of Arts. Why, a man'd laugh, William, if it wasn't so painful. He's going to put that sharp nose of his between the pages of a book, and come out winking at the sun a full-blown Master of Arts. Why, I was master of more arts at his time of life than he'll be if he lives to be a hundred."

I laughed, though indeed there was no laughter with Jeremiah. If he was rueful, he was bitter, and his eyes rolled angrily at me, checking the laughter on my lips.

"Come now, Jeremiah," I urged, "give the lad his chance."

"Isn't that just what I wanted to give him? Instead of that he goes and wastes five precious years of it, and will waste another two before he gets off this new pedestal of his and discovers that younger lads than he are far ahead of him in the running. If he only wastes another two, he'll be lucky. Bachelor—why bachelor? And Arts—why arts? And why Bachelor of Arts? If anybody would only explain to me what the damned thing meant, it wouldn't be so

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bad. But it means just nothing, and is only words. And there he is, fit only for addressing envelopes."

At the time I had difficulty in taking him seriously. "Look at here, Jeremiah," I protested, "hasn't he been practising his mind on other things than the concerns of this office? Say they're not better things, they're at least different things, and so he comes in now fresh instead of being stale and tired of them. That gives him a better start at an interesting time of life. You'll find in a month or two he'll have schemes for the entire change of everything here. We'll have to be patient with him then; but at any rate he probably wouldn't have had that interest had he been here all the time."

He looked at me keenly for a moment. "Ay, there's something in that. But that's supposing you're dealing with a lad like Martin, into whom you've got to put something before you can get anything out. The same rule doesn't apply to Diarmuid O'Hara. What's to stop him coming straight in here?"

"Now?" I asked, startled.

"Ay, now, before . . . before he's any longer on the road. Before his mind is filled up with any more nonsense." (How like him it was courageously to return and complete the sentence he had shied at first!) "It's just what he requires, to have his mind brought face to face with the world. In two years he'd be a man in understanding. Sure. Don't I know him well? He has the very class of mind that quickly grows muscles with exercising itself on facts; and if he were to come in here he'd be safe. He'd be safe surely."

"I don't think Helen would like that too well."

"Didn't she have her way with her boy, and can't I have my way with mine? And there are more risks with Diarmuid O'Hara."

There were times when I found it difficult to understand Jeremiah. One would think that there was some great evil monster with which he was fighting

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for the possession of Diarmuid—some terrible possibility in his own mind from which he endeavoured to snatch Diarmuid before it was too late. As he spoke that possibility was very apparent to him clearly, though what and why was past my telling.

“Diarmuid himself might have something to say to that himself,” I said with a coldness I would gladly have recalled.

He made no reply, but looked at me long with eyes that searched into mine. I had the curious sense then that his height was not so commanding, nor his brow so broad. That was probably the result of a lack of confidence, a merely spiritual diminishment, for he was certainly irresolute and abashed for all his intentness.

He said no more, but turned incisively to the business of the day, as though glad to be in a house where the walls were familiar. Yet it seemed to me that I had now an occasion for seeking conversation with Diarmuid.

3.

I did not hasten. Haste makes fools repent their folly and brings the wise to stumbling. Besides, without assuming the privileges either of wisdom or of folly, I had no wish to undertake a rash encounter with Diarmuid, whose reticence since the going of Patrick Bronty had taken a hardness of manner that could be extremely disconcerting.

The chance came to me one evening when Jeremiah, Helen and Martin had gone out to some entertainment, and Diarmuid came down with his books to the fire in the sitting-room.

“I never expected to share with you, Diarmuid, the distinction of being the only two bookmen in the house, do you know,” I said, with rather heavy-footed pleasantry, I fear.

“Is that so?” he said, with forbidding hostility. He was like a young hawk prepared to strike.

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"Well, it looks like it, doesn't it? I'm afraid it's only a gloss on the facts, all the same."

"What do you mean by that?" he asked cautiously, the hawk in his eyes about to stoop.

"Nothing hurtful to you. I hope you believe that?"

"I know that," he said, suddenly humbled; and a light leapt in my heart.

"Far from it. What is true diligence in you is only an escape from diligence in me, I'm afraid. Still, I ought to stand up for myself, too. I'll not allow you all the virtue to-night, now I come to think on it. You're simply grinding away because you must, because it's your duty, and I'm entertaining my soul with the best of pleasure. The people at the theatre think we're both martyrs, no doubt, but I wonder which of us really in the martyr. I shouldn't wonder but the martyrs of history were really very happy people after all, and not at all doleful. I'm not doleful anyway. Are you?"

"I don't know that I'm not," he said whimsically, turning over the leaves of his book. "I suppose I oughtn't to be, now that I've made up my mind to go on with this."

"Wouldn't you prefer to go straight into your father's business?"

"I would not." His startled look at me and the eager emphasis of his words were not encouraging.

"Why so emphatic?"

"Never mind about the why."

"Well, if you're determined to be the martyr . . . the doleful martyr, I mean . . . there's no more to be said. I thought perhaps you'd have preferred to give up the drudgery, in which case I'd speak to your father about it. But, if you have other thoughts in your mind, to be sure. . . ."

He did not fall into my trap. He did not so much as look my way. He pulled forward the shaded stand, propped one of his books against the others, and,

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running his fingers through his hair, started upon his tasks with the grimmest possible determination.

He made a pleasant picture. He looked more than his sixteen years, yet his expression was young. His hair fell in waves about his fingers buried in that black and troubled sea. A slight down had already begun to gather upon his upper lip. He had Jeremiah's head: broad in the face, with high cheek bones; broad and expansive in the brow; and a forehead well thrown forward above the eyes and arched down to the temples. His eyes were more deeply-set than Jeremiah's, but the modelling of the face on it was the same. The light from his book fell upward, and the red light from the shade shone on his hair, making him all light and shadow.

I could see he was not reading. An artist might have painted just such a picture of grim concentration. The scholar at his books, might have been its title. Yet no scholar was he. His gaze was upon his page, but his vision was far away.

Then he turned to me again, and looked at me with the same intent gaze.

"What did you mean by the martyrs of history being happy people?"

"I think they were. I think they were in love with what they were doing . . . in love with their service of perfection or of honour. What should they be doleful about? It's only we who are doleful about them, not they who were doleful about themselves."

"In love?"

"Surely in love. No great work was ever yet done that wasn't done for love . . . and in love, for that matter."

"You mean Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone?"

"They, too, I suppose . . . indeed I am sure."

"You didn't mean them at first, though?"

"I wasn't thinking of them at first, but I mean them now. They could have had distinguished careers, but they gave up career and life for love."

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It must have been a great uplifting love that drew Robert Emmet from his human love for Sarah Curran, don't you think, and made the two of them memorable for ever."

"It must," he agreed. "And is that why you hung that big medal of Emmet in your room?"

I nodded, and I prayed that my nod conveyed more conviction to my questioner than it aroused in me. His attack was disconcerting.

"How many more of those medals do you think the man made who sold yours?"

"How do I know? A good many, I imagine. But why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing," he said, and sat up in his chair. "Only if you'd been living that time, and all the others had been living that time, you'd all have voted him down a fool, going out with a handful of men to take a castle and get hanged in the heel of the hunt. That's all. Now you say he was happy and in love with honour."

"If I had said that then, I would have been wrong." I bared myself to his criticism. "Perhaps I would have said it then."

"Padraic Bronty wouldn't have said it then. Aeneas O'Maille wouldn't have said it then. And there's a lot more I know wouldn't have said it then. They wouldn't have been thinking of what they were going to lose by it, but just of what was fine and beautiful."

Fine and beautiful. Was ever such a phrase delivered in such a manner? If our depthless Martin had spoken thus in wild enthusiasm one would have understood, and have humoured him. One could even have honoured him. But now spoken so dispassionately, withal so defiantly, it left one without words. Diarmuid, however, supplied the words.

"You don't hear anything now of all those who made crocks of money then like father. Only of Robert Emmet who gave up everything. That's

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queer now, isn't it? And Padraic Bronty's another fool, who gave up crocks of money because he's in love with Ireland. And he's quite happy, too; do you know that?"

"Don't let us talk of Patrick Bronty, Diarmuid. I haven't changed my opinion of him in any essential. But I'll admit I think a great deal more of him, and I'm in all admiration of his detachment in leaving the business. I don't agree with it. I think it quite unnecessary. But it was very fine in that few would have done it."

"Father didn't think it was fine, did he?"

"How do you know? I wouldn't be so sure now. Perhaps he admired it more than we realise, and would have liked to have been able to do the same himself. Don't misjudge your own father, Diarmuid. He's a very great man. I don't think that any one of us is a mere machine for making crocks of money, and I'm perfectly sure your father is not. He has had a hard life, do you know, and we don't know what he mightn't have been had life taken him otherwise."

"Is that what he's afraid of then?"

"What do you mean?" I looked sharply at the boy, who had dropped his question with so cool a penetration.

He was not looking directly at me. His face was withdrawn into the shadow. Yet I saw he was observing me closely.

"He is afraid of something, isn't he?"

"Is he?" I said guilelessly. "Tell me all about it."

"I don't know anything about it, only mother told you about his dreams. It must be something in himself if it's dreams, mustn't it? And they're pretty rotten dreams, too, from what she said. I only dream about the rotten part of myself . . . beastly things."

"Bad men," I said lightly, seeking to wean the conversation away from Jeremiah. . . . "Bad men may dream about beautiful things. That may be why I put the medal of Robert Emmet on my wall,

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because he's my beautiful dream of courage and sacrifice."

My hazard had a remarkable effect on the lad, however. His steadiness slipped from him like a garment, and he leaned forward excitedly.

"I say," he cried, "what an idea. You mean persons only dream about the other half of themselves." He fell back in his chair, and gave a short, dry laugh. "I wonder what the nation Martin dreams about. Fellows like Martin who always play to safety must dream about desperate things, by the same token. And I shouldn't be surprised, do you know, if that wasn't why you did put the medal on your wall, after all."

There was silence between us, which I was not anxious to break, for his half-whimsical acceptance of my criticism of myself hurt me . . . by its very justice, let me admit freely. He, too, was silent, with his forehead held in his hand and his brows drawn down. His cogitations concluded in words spoken as much to himself as to me.

"But father doesn't play to safety. What should he dream about? . . . How well he never answers, though, when you talk what mother calls politics. There's something queer in that, too."

I was appalled, in the way he spoke, at the reflective analysis of this boy. I was strangely stirred by memories of, by pictures printed on my mind by, talks long years before with old Father Lavery, and another lad's shrewd tearing asunder of human motives. But in this case the analysis was unreal and misshapen. Of what value was shrewdness, I thought, if it led merely to the fantastic or if it were begotten of a mind so bitter and precocious? Therefore, vexed as I was, I spoke sharply in reply.

"Look at here, Diarmuid," I said, "there's such a thing as proportion. If every man were to be put to the examination you seem determined to give your father, I wonder now how many of us would escape

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a lunatic asylum. Did you ever think of that now? Will you tell me, in the name of sense, why should your father bother his head about politics? Aren't there enough to attend to such things, and hasn't he many another thing to mind?"

He turned slowly and fully toward me, and even before he spoke one word I was abashed by the angered dignity of his manner.

"Why should he? Why should I bother about my mother, if it isn't because she is my mother, and not anybody else's mother? Didn't she bother for me, like the ripping person that she is? And do you suppose I'd be any class if I let someone clout her across the road just because I'd an old trade to mind? And what about all the others? Will you tell me that? What about Robert Emmet, and Wolfe Tone, and Parnell, and Hugh O'Neill, and Thomas Davis . . . all of those that fought and fell? Haven't we got to be faithful to them, too? They're nothing, I suppose. It's all a joke about them. Forget all about them, and butter-up the other side? Never give a heed to the flag they ran down to us, and they thinking we'd take it and run on? All that history's a funny joke, so it is, and we're the grand fellows with other things to attend to, crocks of money, and jobs, and a medal on the wall. They were fine fellows because they went out to lose with a happy heart, but it's we are the boys because we take tarnation good care we back the winner. Huh! . . ."

He flung himself round in his chair, and dragged his books across the table toward him.

"Diarmuid, Diarmuid," I remonstrated with his violence, "don't mix up things that differ. All those things are our splendid past, our very splendid and noble past. But they are past. We live in different times . . . perhaps meaner times, but surely different times. You want your father to revive his youth. You want Ireland to revive her youth. You may even want the old world to revive its youth. But it

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can't be done. The past is past. We've got to think and plan for the future with the best wit God has given us."

"Maybe, and maybe not. . . . But I've got to get on with my work."

He lay sprawled across the table, and there was long silence between us; but his work was a mere pretence. His flushed cheek, his deep bright eyes, were tokens to me that he was too greatly moved for attention to the printed page before him. I watched him furtively, but I said no more. I did not dare to break in upon him in his present mood.

The silence flowed by like a deep river. Then he sprang up and snatched his books together.

"Oh, damn," he said, "there are the others, and I've done nothing."

There was a catch in his voice, and there were tears in his eyes, but he did not snare me into believing that these were the result of his vexation.

4.

I knew well the following morning the question Jeremiah waited to put to me. His letters were before him as he sat at his desk, but he had not begun to read them. I also waited, for there was a question in my mind, too. Then at last he spoke, casually, and without turning to me.

"You had a talk with Diarmuid O'Hara last night?"

"How do you know that now?"

"Helen told me she saw the heels of him up the stairs as we came in. And the book in your fist wasn't even open."

"Well, I was talking with him. Just a bit of a talk, that is."

"What did you make of him?"

"You wouldn't expect me, would you, to break any confidence he may legitimately require of me?"

"Just generally; just generally. I am his father,

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amn't I? and should know something." Ah, the strain of anxiety in that voice, the choked expression of it, where confidence had always rung so firmly. And he had never turned from me before in speaking to me.

"Well, we've all had our generous enthusiasms, I suppose. They did credit to our youth. They did, indeed, for who would give a twig for youth that wasn't in love with enthusiasm? I was that way myself. I'm sure you were also, weren't you?"

He turned toward me quickly, for one brief moment.

"Did he suggest that?"

"He? Why should he? But we all were . . . I know I was. But we all outgrew it. Pity, I suppose. We would all like life to be constant Springtime, and bright with the flowers of fancy; but it takes a Summer and Autumn and a Winter before the year's whole. Therefore we must be patient and not look for Hallowe'en in May, do you know. And I am confident that with Diarmuid our expectancy need not be in any fear, for a stranger enthusiasm than his I have never seen. He himself convinces me more than any other that the world is growing older and staler. It's a good thing, I can tell you, Jeremiah, a good thing for Ireland, that other generations did not take their enthusiasms like this, if Diarmuid is any standard. He's like a good many other young fellows one meets—hard, critical, analytical, and too wonderfully in check ever to last, I'm quite sure. What's this about the mare foaling the fiddler in the beyond the beyonds. Well, I'll live to see that before I'll live to see hope born of embitterment, or ideals got from realism, so I will. It doesn't suit. . . ."

An exclamation of impatience from Jeremiah stopped me. His face was still turned from me, so that I could not see what emotions fled across it, except that I knew he was suffering.

"I don't know what you're talking about, William;

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but I do know that here's a pile of work, and what's the use of my building a great house if there's no one to live in it, and no one to make it bigger and broader? Did you suggest that he should come into this office straightaway?"

"I did; but he seems to want to go on to the University."

"What would he want that for? He was never one for the books. He had too much sense." He was fully turned to me now, and fought astonishingly with me like a man at bay.

"It seems to me very natural, I must say. Why should any boy wish to come into this office when he can have a little further freedom? I don't see your point of view in this at all."

"Not when he can get down to real things?"

"Maybe he has a different idea of what are real things."


"Ay . . . ay . . . that's just it. I know it in the nerve of the marrow of my bones that if we don't get this boy soon we won't get him at all. Do you know that? I must have a right talk to him myself."

"I wouldn't do that," I said, remembering in fear the lad's comments on his father. "That's to say, do, but not about coming in here at once. You'll do much better leaving him to himself. He's the young world, and the young world will ripen and age with him as it did with us. Never fear about that. Can't you remember your own youth?"

"That's just what I am doing, would you believe that?" he said, lifting himself to the full of his height, splendid in his dignity. "I'm doing that very thing, and don't I know well what's passing in him, for it all passed in me. Things that are very nice, things that ought to be perhaps, and facts, both playing a gamble for him. Likely you're right though. The things that ought to be are the things that never come to happen. They're all beautiful and

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fine; but they're like the warm window of an inn, red and wet with heat, when you're outside in the cold trying to sell an odd paper. They don't come to anything, because there aren't enough people believing in them. It's the hard things that win in the end, because they're the only real things, like a welt on the ear that makes you know what cold really is, and all for begging. They're the only things that win; they're the only things folk believe in; and they're bound to triumph. Sure. They'll triumph with this Diarmuid O'Hara as they did with . . . with many another before him. Come on now, and we'll build a good secure house for him to live in, so that he need never be afraid."



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

I.

THERE was once a tradition in our National Theatre (it is now no more than a tradition, it appears) that as each actor received the action from his fellows, their eyes turned toward him, and remained with him till he passed it elsewhere in his turn. Always the eyes of all the actors followed the action of their play as it moved among them.

WHATEVER about the National Theatre, it was so with us in our little household play—our little household play that so remarkably figured, if not pre-figured, scenes as large as the world itself. Helen's eyes were turned towards her son, coolly and critically, with that half-humour that so ineffably constituted her dignity. For my part, my eyes were frankly turned toward the boy whose voice broke so lovingly into manhood, like a house that cracked as it settled upon its foundations. He absorbed me. He made business hours a monotony till one could come within sight of him again. It was the same with Jeremiah. With him the regard was furtive, though it was surely the most deeply engaged of all. Whoever else he might deceive by the terrific energy with which he threw himself into all the passing business of his days, or by the detailed care with which he built a wall about him to enclose his interest, he did not deceive me, and he did not deceive Helen Hare. He might not, and for that matter did not overtly, betray the least interest outside the dizzy palace of success he so splendidly erected before the gaze of envy, but he knew that it is not what a man thinks that matters, but what a

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man seeks to prevent himself from thinking, not what he sees, but the thing from which he averts his gaze. He taught us that lesson constantly, taught it to us unforgettably. On the little stage of our life together, his averted shoulder more clearly indicated the boy Diarmuid O'Hara, who came through the years toward him with the splendid and strangely youthful offering of his enthusiasm, than the frank attention either of Helen Hare or myself. That there was something incredibly like fear in that averted shoulder, where there was only wonder or interest in our steady gaze, made the indicated figure of the lad stand all the more remarkably out among us.

Only Martin looked another way. But he also was young, and his eyes were through the world. Beside which, for all the difference in their years, Martin was more than a little in fear of the possibilities of scorn in his brother. Youth may be venturesome, but the particular kind of venture it loves does not induce it to wander near the lair where scorn sits crouched. The budding sprig will dare all but frost; and scorn is the frost of youth. So Martin, the dear lad, knowing the unexpressed (but instantly expressible), turned his eyes other ways than toward his brother.

For the rest of us, Diarmuid drew our eyes and caught up our interest. Had he set out to do this he would not have succeeded. Because he was so cold, so determined, so negligent of everything outside the intense concern of the quest he followed, we looked toward him as he assumed the action of our household life.

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2.

He carried the University at the first assault, without distinction, but without doubt or hesitation.

"That's that," he said to Helen and myself when he came from the examination, flinging a packet of books from him.

"Do you think you passed?" she asked, looking up at his frowning face.

"I don't think anything about it. I know. But what the holy smoke I'm going to do with sines and cosines is what I couldn't tell you. I don't see where they're ever going to come into anything. I suppose masters and professors have got to make a job for themselves like everybody else."

Helen smiled with quiet assurance of him; but I ventured to touch his blade.

"And yet you wanted to go in for it?"

"I did, then. I wanted to go in for it."

His manner was rock-like and inscrutable, but after a moment or two of wariness he looked towards me. When he saw my smile he smiled too. That smile came first like a light into his eyes before it shone across his features. It was the smile of an antagonist who trusted me, and I laughed softly with the joy it brought me.

He worked hard, too, harder than perhaps another would have had occasion, yet never harder than enough to keep in the general line of advance. He evidently judged it necessary to keep abreast of his studies if he was to justify the course he was taking, for beyond that his interest was never too deeply engaged. He had a quaint deep sense of conscientiousness, of responsibility, very astonishing in a boy of his age, and all the more astonishing when it was too clear that the student's road was hard for him. He was like someone sculling a boat against the tide,

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keeping its head well forward, but not interested in the task except that it entitled him to be in the boat, and that he was determined to keep his place there.

It would have been interesting to see what he would have chosen for a career had the choice been left open for him. There is not much outlet in our national life for a student the chief of whose interest moves towards our tragical history, full though it be of pride, dark-set with strife, loud with bitter wailing in the sunset of a splendid hour, defeated yet never despairing and indomitable in its purpose. Not much outlet, not much hope, to be sure, nor much for ambition to feed upon in silence. Yet this history was his chief occupation. He turned to it with eagerness as though he were to construct out of it a universal philosophy. For there was the streak of something universal in him as there was in his father. In that he was very son of his father. Whatever might conceivably have enlisted his interest he would have touched to large issues—to the largest issues. He had the necessary concentration of purpose as well as the transfiguring touch of quality. So my fondness saw in him at any rate. Just as his father wrought not only success but a philosophy out of it too, and clothed a success that might have been vulgar in a raiment that made it, first for him and then for others, shining and luminous, so this new Diarmuid O'Hara faring on his days would find whatever he found in a meaning of universal application. He was destined to do that by the instinct of his nature. For that, I would say, he was born his father's son. Yet he impatiently flung aside mathematics, that might have given this larger setting; for science, though he took a science course, he had scant interest; and literature did not seem to stir him greatly. It was only in our little history that he seemed to discover the concern that one would have thought would have

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turned from it to bigger things. What wonder that I watched him all the more keenly.

Chance gave me the opportunity of watching this. There was a grain (no more than just a grain) of the parsimonious in Helen that revealed itself in little ways. It was part of the tight rein with which she ever held herself. Wealthy though her means were, and sumptuously though it was her pride to furnish her house, she never permitted fires in her sons' rooms. And so Diarmuid, like Martin before him, always brought his studies down to the common sitting-room during the winter evenings. So I made it a point, too, to come there, so as to be near him.

I observed him, therefore. Jeremiah, who missed little, I think knew that I observed him, and so left me opportunities to be alone with him. How otherwise am I to explain that whereas once whenever the household went out he would not hear of my remaining alone behind them, now he always assumed that I wished to remain alone? On several occasions Helen protested, but he always bluffly answered that I must know my own mind. So I fell into the place he wished for me, but which I also wished more disinterestedly than I would have liked to confess to him.

This gave me the chance I wanted, and which I won, perhaps, with the power of wishing. I know that whenever Diarmuid wriggled on his seat he fought his subject at long odds, and that when the silence was long and intent it was not necessary to pass behind him to see the books, Irish or English, that held him so still.

I loved to watch him when he was engaged so. His thick black hair flowed back into darkness from the sea of light into which he peered, like waves flowing into a dark cave with crests that held less and less of the golden sunset that had flashed along their sides. Into that hair his fingers were always caught, whether his work went well or ill. The

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wary mask his face ordinarily wore was shed . . . was melted, rather, by the warmth of his mind. If his work went ill the vexed grim expression of his face revealed a will that could be unpleasant when balked. If it went well, that is to say, if the subject kindled his blood, his face flushed eagerly and his eye shone brightly.

It was then I chiefly loved to watch him. I felt like a guardian angel, observing all while all unobserved, I in my shadowed distance, with my own reading shade, of green other-worldliness, lovingly looking across a vale of darkness at this eager mortal under his ruddy human glow. It was like him to disillusion me. For he turned about and looked to me across the darkness. Question and scrutiny caught his face in a frown. Then these melted into a confiding smile, and his fingers rapped the page before him.

"They cannot take that from us anyway, do you know," he said in happy triumph.

"Who do you mean by 'they'?"

"It doesn't matter who they are, they cannot do it." A ripe book-lover might have fingered as lovingly a priceless but not less tawdry treasure. "We did a throng of queer things in our time, but we never sold our birthright, did we? Ay, and we didn't cut beggarman's capers to thieve any other person's birthright either, by the same token, do you know. That's what's so perfectly splendid. We just paid what we owed, and let the rest go hang itself. We did, didn't we? This person says we went out always gloriously to fail. I don't know about that. If we did our duty, if we paid up what we owed to those that went before us, and kept the flag flying for those that came after us, I don't see the failure in that, so I don't. Do you?"

It would have been monstrous to have checked his glowing pride. Besides, he kindled a pride in my older blood. Yet I was pricked with the reminder that I was in guard over our household

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treasure. I remembered the makeweight of an elder's wisdom if the scales were to be held evenly in life.

"It would have been better not to have failed, wouldn't it?" I then suggested kindly.

"I don't know about that. That's what Padraic was always saying, but the Master always said you couldn't measure success with a foot-rule. I didn't understand him then, but I'm beginning to understand him now. He used to say, we'd have to learn to weigh instead of measuring things. That's what he said, and by the same token that's what makes this so fine, though it makes you savage, too." He rapped his book again. "Isn't that simply why they cannot take it from us? If you could measure all that, like you measure the Roman Empire, you could take it all away again. But when folk go on fighting just to keep a flag flying . . . I know you think I'm talking pure cod," he finished fiercely in the middle of his tangle.

"I don't think anything of the sort, Diarmuid. I know what you're saying is noble and pure, but the wisdom of the world unfortunately goes all the other way . . ."

"Then why do you call it noble and pure?" he interrupted with keen question in his voice. "Either it is or it isn't. You'd make out that all this is sky-blue nothing, but you know all the time it's not, and I know it's not. Look at here, what about your Robert Emmet medal? That's what I want to know, and I'm going to find out, so I am. I don't believe Ireland was all wrong. I believe in Ireland. If I didn't, I'd go off somewhere where I did believe."

It was always so. Whenever I sought to redress his enthusiasm with a little worldly wisdom, he never failed to wave my innocent medallion of Emmet at me, or the history he loved. I had no right to complain. Rather had I cause to be thankful, for that medallion was, as I perceived, my title to his confidence. He was not often so naked even with me;

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but he never spoke of these things either to Jeremiah or to Helen. With his father he was now as cautious as ever, but he was hard and stern as well. Before his father he bore a front as of rock. With his mother he was indulgent and mysterious, as if from the fields on which his splendid youth waged its war he could afford to come in duty and dip his lance before her tent.

Thus he was to all of us who shared his household life as he grew to knowledge of himself. To his brother he was ungracious and uncomely, and they had little to do with one another. To me he mixed reserve with sudden confidence. To his mother he gave loving duty, sharing with her the love that was their deep intelligence of one another. But more and more he kept on guard against his father.

Father and son exchanged few words. Fondly I had hoped that years would have removed this. Instead of which, years seemed unnaturally to have accustomed us all to a pitiful state of affairs. It was the more bewildering to me when I reflected that Diarmuid was undergoing the very identical strife Jeremiah (under what different circumstances) had endured before him. The terms of the struggle, to be sure, may have been different, but the meaning of it was the same. There was nothing in Jeremiah that was not possible, with years and a like experience, to Diarmuid. There was nothing in Diarmuid that was not an anticipation of all that had come about in Jeremiah. The difference between them was not in either of them, but in the interruption of time.

Surely I may say more even than this—I who knew one of them so well and was now beginning to understand the other. What most troubled my thoughts, when I bore to my room the picture of these two confronting one another in silence like foes, was just their common likeness. It is not easy to express, yet it was often most vivid. In Diarmuid O'Hara lurked the future likeness of his father. In Jeremiah Hare was hidden the past likeness of his

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son. Am I fantastic? Then is life fantastic; for here was the very thing revealed before me. Yet it was not a thing of the past or future; but of the present. There behind the immediate front of Diarmuid's knightly youth stood the greater figure of his father ready with time to come forward and command his life. There behind the immediate front of Jeremiah's instant command of life, behind his masterly air of the conqueror, crouched the knightly figure of his son, overthrown by hard experience, yet exerting an influence the deeper because it was unacknowledged.

As I fondly comforted myself, perhaps they were silent with one another, this wrestling son and this masterful father, because for them to have spoken would almost have been like a soliloquy across time. And if I seem fantastic again, I can but point to the facts of their case.

In truth, it was to overcome this fantastic thing that haunted me that I tried to drive their hostility into speech, thinking that then the barriers would be thrown aside and the two rivers flow together. I failed; and it was when I had admitted my failure to myself that events, with unexpected results, brought the thing to pass before my eyes.

3.

During the late Summer of 1913, when Diarmuid had just completed his eighteenth year, a bitter war broke out in our city between employer and worker. There was no real occasion in it that I could see, except that a hoarse and tumultuous figure thought fit to carry a torch of war (the firebrand of a crusade, rather) down among the workers, utterly breaking the goodwill that till then had reigned. No doubt, he had his purpose; and as it is unnecessary, at this distance, to awaken that bitterness, it is enough to state the bare facts. Most of the workers in the city were engaged in that war, and the employers had bound them-

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selves together in a fighting federation. None in the city thought of anything else. Who could have room for other thoughts when they reflected on the misery on the one side and the ruined trade on the other?

The harshest challenges were flung from side to side. With all this Jeremiah had little patience, yet he was angry. He was losing hundreds of pounds a week, and so he had cause for his anger; but it was not the loss of money but the set-back to his continual advance that angered him most. Nevertheless, he never dreamed of defeat. There was for him only one possible outcome to the war, and that was the victory of his side. And so, his composure laid aside, he raged against the futility of it all, and raged the more because it was impossible for him to admit to himself any other conclusion than the kind of crushing triumph to which he had accustomed his life. He was, in fact, a foremost figure on our side. When one of his colleagues spoke of hunger and an empty belly for workers he was wrath; he was, indeed, almost a stricken man for some days, as though he had seen a spectre. But he conquered himself, and threw himself all the more eagerly into the fray.

What was then my dismay when I heard from Helen one evening that Diarmuid had joined the other side, and was daily in their stronghold. Her own infinite composure was shaken, and in her distress she sought my counsel.

"He told me himself," she said in answer to my question. "You would believe he was searching for trouble the way he came to me to-day and told me. He didn't say so, but it was plain to me he wished me to tell his father."

"Of course you cannot do that, Helen," I said hurriedly.

"You think not? I think that myself indeed. But supposing he does so himself?"

"He won't," I said; and as assurance gathered in me I added: "I'm quite sure he won't. That's

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the class of thing the two of them will never discuss. Did you try to dissuade him . . . to point out the foolishness of it, seeing whose son he is?"

"Dissuade him!" She spread my own foolishness before me. "Don't you know Jerry yourself? Let me tell you what a mother knows, William, that you must let time and Jerry alone. It's we women who have the faith of our children, because we bore them. Look at Jerry and his father. Only you must help me keep this from his father, or there'll be trouble . . . especially seeing the wild way Jeremiah is over this stupid business. One would think he was trying to destroy a serpent in his brain to judge from his extravagance in this affair. He was never quite like this before."

I gave her my promise, but her words started me thinking. Certainly Jeremiah was most strange over this strike. He was almost vengeful. When I remembered that he himself had known something of the depths that were the daily experience of these foolish men, it was actually unpleasant to notice his grim resolve for victory. He thought of little else; he spoke little; even his business was neglected; and a fever seemed to consume him. I avoided him as much as I could, for there was something in him now, as I considered it in the light of Helen's words, that stirred up the depths of one's distaste. A serpent in his own mind, she called it. Well, it was not pleasant to see a man fighting a serpent in his own mind, I agreed. And I was resolved to keep from him all knowledge of Diarmuid's escapade lest he should have to fight a serpent in his own breast, too.

Puzzled, distressed, as I was over these things, I stopped in Dame Street some days after this conversation, with a presentiment of evil. I simply came

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to a halt, unable to proceed, tied there unaccountably by a sudden misery. Then I saw before me the figure of Patrick Brontë. He had his hand outstretched, and his lips were caught in a wry, sardonic smile—no doubt the smile was not by intention wry and sardonic, but it came to the same thing. I put my hand in his cheerlessly in spite of my effort to look welcomingly.

"You're back," I said.

"I am, then," he replied, and his voice was sardonic, too. "I guess I ought to apologise for stopping you. Your manner seems to intimate so much to me. . . ."

"Ah, I'm only distressed about an odd thing. You will forgive my manner?"

"I only wished to ask you about Hare, the way he is. 'Twouldn't be easy for me to see him, considering what fell out between us; and yet I've a wish to know how he is."

"You've seen young Diarmuid?" I asked. Did I ask it; or did my thoughts slip into speech outside my will? I shuddered, like one who would grasp after them to withdraw them; but it was too late.

His face darkened, and his eyes lit suddenly in his head like burning coals. Then his mask clothed his thoughts again, but his voice was tense and fierce in reply.

"I often wondered was it you put that madness into his mind. Sensible men wouldn't prance like apes without some hellish potion in their blood. 'Tisn't in Hare, anyway, to do the like of that. 'Tisn't, and 'twasn't, and 'twill never be. Since you ask it, however, no harm to say that I did see Diarmuid. And since 'tis clear it'd be wise to be quite explicit, it's no harm to add further that I heard after arriving that he was at the University; that I saw him there yesterday morning by the same token; that I went there to say one thing; and that I did say that one thing—that one thing being

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that it was his duty to take up a chemistry course : my reason being, further, that, seeing we're to make some kind of a beginning with this Gas-and-Water Bill so fitly imagined in the great Gas-and-Water Mother of Parliaments, our duty will be to master the conditions of holding our own and stealing a march on England. Therefore I told him to go in for chemistry, for all future progress will be won in the laboratory before it will be transferred into fact outside the laboratory. I don't think there was anything else I said. He's not exactly talkative, and I amn't either. If there was anything else, I'd tell you. Now, how is Hare ? Is he well ? Particularly, is he over his madness, and could I talk reasonably with him ? My reason quite explicitly is, once again, that I don't want any falling out between Hare, who is a great man, and the boy, who is greater. If the boy gets the chemistry he'll want the money, do you see ; and I want to clear up that old rubbish. That's a thing I'd a right to do."

"I don't think I should see him," I said humbly, for he overwhelmed me with his unexpected force of expression. "He is very disturbed presently, over this Strike and other things. I would wait if I were you, do you know."

"Very well. You've a right to know. I'll wait then." He turned from me ; lifted his hand in a light salute ; and strode off.

I was stunned by his appearance ; I was stunned still more by his forcefulness ; and I went about my business hardly yet having gathered together my scattered wits.

On my return to the office Jeremiah was walking up and down. This was unusual with him. His manner, too, was menacing—or, perhaps, curiously alert, like an eagle with head uplifted and watchful eye. I glanced at him, and was walking past him to my desk, when he stopped me.

"Bronty's back," he said.

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"I know. I'm after seeing him."

"He spoke to you so."

"He did. Did you speak to him?"

"I? Didn't he pass me? Couldn't he stop and speak to me? I wonder what he's doing anyway, now he is back."

He said no more, and I was left to guess, as we fell to our work again, what thoughts mixed in his mind together, and what thought of them all would emerge triumphant.

5.

It must, by a fatal chance, be that very afternoon that Jeremiah should receive his telephone message from the paper. What it concerned I did not then know, and I could not gather from the one half of the conversation I heard. Something had apparently occurred in connection with a Strike meeting in Beresford Place. The other evening papers would be sure to print it, and I gathered the question was whether his own paper also should print it. For I heard Jeremiah in a choked, baffled tone say it was not to be printed, and then a clear challenge cry that it was to be printed.

Whateyer the news was, its effect on Jeremiah was that there was no more work for him that day. He sat at his desk, staring before him. He said nothing to me, but I knew he wanted to be alone. So I left him. Before I turned for home I bought all the evening papers.

There in his own paper I read the simple statement that among the speakers at a Strike meeting that day had been a certain J. Hare. That was all. But in the other papers the fuller statement was made that young Jeremiah Hare had repudiated his father's part in the Strike, and had taken his stand with the strikers.

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So it had come to this. This, then, was the end of the house of security Jeremiah had built for his sons, that he should be repudiated in his defence of that house by the son for whom he had chiefly designed it. This was the outcome of the broad philosophy in which life's great adventure had been framed, a philosophy that refused to recognise anything outside the facts of human conduct, that it should be confronted with the unnatural fact of a son's repudiation. With a sick heart I turned for home.

Jeremiah was already there before me. Nothing in his manner denoted a change, save that, to one who knew him, his wide eye and gathered silence signified an issue he was now prepared to meet. No change in the manner surely; but there was a great change in the man. He was older—literally inconceivably older. Aged, indeed, he was, where only a few hours before the wave of grey that had broken on his head with time had only changed the outward character of his splendour. That very splendour was now in shade. It shrank like a diminished thing. It (nay, he himself) was dimmer, less positive in appearance. In consequence, he was smaller and slighter, or seemed so. He was shorn of something—something that till now had, like a glory about his body, constituted for him, as perhaps for us all, that greater part of himself we call personality. His face looked tired and aged; but that was the least part of the change that shocked me as he sat silent and still, waiting. His silence was such that it held the three of us tense and unable to leave the room.

It was late before Diarmuid came in. Still Jeremiah said nothing. His silence pended, like a great threatening wave held in an eternal moment before it breaks upon the shore. Diarmuid, too, was caught in our suspense; for we were all idle, and made even no pretence of occupation as Jeremiah sat looking straight before him in his chair before the fire.

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When at last he spoke he did not turn his head, but his voice came from his lips with quiet reflective softness. He spoke like one surveying a long road behind him, which he turned to see.

"Will you tell me, Diarmuid O'Hara, what I've been building up my success for . . . the business, this house, everything . . . what for, and for whom?"

I looked quickly across at Diarmuid, but there was no trace of nervousness in him that I could detect. His eye was as wide and his alertness as gathered as his father's as he surveyed him across the table. Surveyed, do I say? Rather he measured him. He had suddenly become mature in his ready antagonism, and, whatever tumult may or may not have passed within him, he neither flickered nor wavered in the minute or so he let pass before he replied.

"Is it the meeting to-day?" he asked.

"I said nothing about any meeting at all that I mind. Would you answer the question I asked you?"

Another strained silence passed, while we spectators uneasily watched those two, who now (to me at least), in their mere physical appearance, seemed horribly alike.

"Built, is it, father?"

"Sure. This success I've built, with my two hands, and my life."

"You built it to keep us in, and you built it to keep those men I saw to-day out. Didn't you?"

It was then Jeremiah turned about with anger on his son. His eyes were living with anger though the voice was controlled. Had the very devil of cunning entered the boy, he could not have directed more deadly a shaft, so subtly, as I quickly saw, did it cleave its way between his father's wakeful wars and his slumbering memories. This it was—this perfect and innocent accuracy—that stung Jeremiah to anger, and brought round upon us all a haggard, agitated face. Yet as I looked quickly

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at Diarmuid again I perceived that his coldness was caused by simply keeping his attention confined to one or simple propositions.

Then, after some moments of strained silence, Jeremiah's voice spoke steadily out of that silence, and with all the power of that silence behind it.

"Did you see Patrick Bronty since his return?" he asked.

The astonishing boy smiled—one of those smiles of his that stole across his face like a ghost over a moonlit lawn.

"I did indeed," he said, that ghostly smile passing down the very movement of his speech. "I saw him yesterday at the College. I was talking to him. It's very sure you didn't see him yourself, father, or you'd know he's worse against the strikers, in his sort of way, than you are yourself. Says it breaks the national unity . . . that there'll be time for differences when we've won the fight . . . when he really means that he doesn't like the Strike because he's thinking of another kind of Ireland. He talked to me about facts, but there are different kinds of facts, and it depends which kind you choose. He'd agree with you, so he would, and I don't agree with him. But why should you think I cannot find things out for myself; and why shouldn't I if I want to? I'm not Padraic, and Padraic isn't me."

In the air cleansed so wonderfully by these words Jeremiah flushed to some of his own greatness. He was uplifted again.

"Ah, do you say so? Good, then, I was wrong, and I must see him. Let you return now where we began. In the first place, do you know that I'm losing some hundreds of pounds a week in this business?"

"I don't see what that's got to do with it. . . ."

"You don't see, is it? It has got this to do with it, that you'd be slapping your bare legs through your pants but for it, like many another before you."

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Money's only money, sure, a stupid weighty article that sinks well in water. No person ever gathered it, Diarmuid O'Hara, because kings with thin necks on shillings looked like heroes. If that's all you want it for, throw it away and welcome. But what if it's clothes if you're cold, food when you're hungry; safety, shelter; a stiff neck in the world? What if it's the right to be yourself instead of any person's lout? Would you throw them away, you that want to be yourself? Face the facts, my boy. I won't remind you that you wanted to go to College, because that might be sounding mean, but it's there . . . it's there rightly, too. It's you I'm defending, isn't it? And you stand up in the face of the city and say . . . what was it you said? Well?"

"I said right was right, and wrong was wrong, and that if it was right for some men to live like pigs and others like canaries, then there wasn't enough in the same way they were born and the same they died to explain the differ. I said that that wasn't the kind of Ireland I wanted to see, and it isn't. I said there were some maybe who spoke of burning down the good houses, but that was foolish. The proper way was to burn the houses that rotted, and to go live in the good ones. . . . Anyhow, that was what I wanted to say, only I couldn't face through it all. If you were living like them wouldn't you be right to break out of it?"

Jeremiah drew himself erect and breathed deeply as if he had difficulty for air. We were, however, but lookers-on, and it was beyond our power to turn either from his will.

"I amn't talking of what I'd do if I was somewhere else. I'd expect to be fought, I suppose, and I wouldn't be wrong. Sure, Diarmuid O'Hara. And if it happened me that I found the secret road out of hell by putting my eyes to good use, I'd build myself safe against ever being pulled back again."

"Is that all?" The lad's composure was remark-

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able. Either he had thought along strange roads, or was strangely headstrong.

"What else is there? There are dreams, sure; but when you bring all the dreams down to facts . . . ay, when you bring all you said, or wanted to say, to-day down to the ground of the very folk that heard you . . . well, what do they all come to?"

"Dreams?" Diarmuid echoed.

"Just that," rapped Jeremiah, misunderstanding.

Diarmuid turned slowly and looked at me with unspeakable meaning. I looked quickly at Helen, and as her eyes met mine the spectre of her terror confronted me. It all passed in a moment; but in that moment I felt the walls of more than our household security tremble about me. No menace was spoken; the menace was in person in Diarmuid, come up, as it were, from old past days; and I believe I held my breath as it passed with his restraint . . . or his timidity? For I heard him say in hard challenge, then:

"Isn't there any such thing as right being right?"

"Do you mean in what folks say, or do you mean in what folks do?"

"What way do you mean, father?"

"Well, no harm for you to learn what I had to learn at your time of life." Jeremiah spoke more loudly than he as yet had done, and I saw in Helen the restlessness that stirred in me, for I would have stopped the words with every power in my being could I have done so. "For they aren't the same things. By no means are they the same things. Don't take it from me, mind. Give a good heed for yourself, and pull the skin off your eyes while you're doing it. And if I don't mistake you'll find there is one order of things folks say, and there is another order of things folks do. Get that well learnt, and you'll begin to build for yourself, too. You'll stop fighting against the house I built you, by the same token, for that's the way I built it, and that's the

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way everything of the same kind was built. Not by dreams. . . .”

“Not by good dreams, you mean, but by bad dreams,” Diarmuid interrupted breathlessly; but now, happily, the swift knowing accusation brought no menace, for Jeremiah hardly heard it, and brushed it aside impatiently.

“Not by any sort of dreams, but by doing what every other body did since the world was a world. Now I don’t mind . . . don’t mind too much anyway, and won’t mind . . . your turning against me to-day if it was only to bring you to see this, that there are things people say and don’t do, and things people do and don’t say. What’s right in one is right there, but it’s the rule of the world . . . mind that now, it’s the sure rule of the world . . . that it’s not right in the other. Think it out, as you’re apt enough to do, I believe, and keep your eyes skinned.”

There was silence for many minutes. Jeremiah had clearly done. He had been faithful to what he had seen, and one bowed to that; yet I confess I never believed I could have come so near to hating him as I did then. I dared not look at Helen. Yet we were held in a long, long silence. For Diarmuid was looking at his father with brows bent, behind which one could not tell what thoughts were forming. I watched him fascinatedly; and as I watched him an unfixed, unknown memory troubled me. It was not till late that night that I fixed it, and brought its time and image before me. It was the picture Father Laverty had left on my mind many, many years before, of another Diarmuid O’Hara standing before Marcus Blake with a rejected evening paper in his hand. And now at length this new Diarmuid O’Hara spoke to his elder in time in, no doubt, much the same manner, throwing across my mind like a mist the bewilderment of years.

“And what about the others?”

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"What about them? Which others?"

"The heroes, the poets, the great men . . . the men folk stamp medals of and write books about?"

The questioner, like his question, hung like an arrow in flight, and Jeremiah turned on him with an answer that would have been broadly humorous had not its grimness been so stark.

"Oh, they? They get medals and books when they're dead and safely out of the road. They're the world's safety-valve, Diarmuid O'Hara, and 'tis a poor business being a safety-valve. There's neither sense nor safety in it, except for the others. There's neither food nor fun in it, neither comfort nor satisfaction. You can see that for yourself. When they were living, that sort, there was the chance they might be a danger, do you know. They were apt, that sort, to mix the things folk say with the things folk do, to mix up the praise of one with the practice of the other, which is a very dangerous class of thing to do. So they were left alone. When they died out of it they passed into the world of words, and so it was quite right and proper there should be books written about them. Their real job was to get dead, do you see, for the world of works can get on neater and nicer, and quicker too by the same token, when it can engage dead men to put fools astray. I learnt early not to get put astray . . . earlier than you're now coming to the same thing . . . learnt it in a hard school that I've saved you from. And because I've saved you from it, am I to find now that you turn from it and become one of the fools? Nice business that would be, faith. Have sense, boy. I've built a grand safe house for you, and you'll be better employed living in it and adding to it, instead of trying to destroy it, by the same wisdom that it's better to be a living man hiring the dead than a dead man serving the living. That's the fact I kicked my toes against . . . bare

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toes, too, do you know . . . till I learned 'twas better to put the fact to proper use than to be angry against it. That's why I'm talking to you now. Perhaps I'd a right to have done it long ago."

So often had I fallen before so complete, so unanswerable a wisdom, that I marvelled at the lad who still sat looking on his father with eyes that never flickered. His patience, his sense of gatheredness, puzzled me.

"But," said he, "I meant those who do the things people praise."

"They get put in jail, when they're not so lucky as to get hanged or starved to death at once. It's a pity for them, surely. We'll allow that, all of us, when we get talking. But the fact is they went against the law of the world. Sure. You'll likely read in your books of such a thing as the law of gravity, and if you think to defy it by leaping from . . . say the Pillar . . . well, it's a case for a funeral, isn't it? Calling it a pity doesn't alter it that I know. It never did, and it never will. Can't you see the difference between the two different things?"

Jeremiah was now all his splendid confident self. He seemed physically splendid again. His hard hatefulness had vanished with the coming of this richer mood. The fear that had hung about him, and before him, like a cloud, was dispelled, now that he had before him the menace that had created it. That was clear from the glad assurance of his manner; but I was not so confident of what might not fall like a bolt from a clear sky into this crystal bowl the father had fashioned, when I saw the penetrating intentness of the scorn across the table. For Diarmuid was like a carven image of hostile questioning.

"Is that all that's in it, father?" he asked, and, as usual, he let a silence pass before he spoke.

"Shew me anything else, and I'll reneague. Facts, Diarmuid O'Hara. I'll never gainsay facts. But it must be something that's done, not something

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that's talked about. You see, I want you to look into it for yourself."

"What about Robert Emmet?"

"Wasn't that the fellow that was hanged?"

"And Wolfe Tone?"

"Committed suicide, didn't he?"

"And John Mitchell?"

"Went to jail."

I felt as if my heart went out to Diarmuid, for the contest was so unequal; but the lad did not look sorry for himself.

"They're living now all the same, aren't they?"

"In books; and in what people say; not in what people do. It all comes back to that."

"Didn't you ever think, father, that you'd like to try again what they tried?"

There was such a hard contempt in the lad's voice that Jeremiah looked at him in sudden alarm.

"What do you mean?" he asked warily, while the two of them looked full into one another's eyes.

"Didn't you ever think that the sort of things people did were so beastly and filthy that you'd like to smash them all up . . . just to give them a chance of doing the sort of things they praised?"

An impatient answer almost broke from Jeremiah. His hand was raised as though to crush. But he restrained himself.

"If I did, I soon got over it. 'Twas as well for me, or I wouldn't be where I am now. And you wouldn't either."

"But didn't you ever wish to do the sort of things that are fine? Didn't you ever yourself want to make everything different, when you were like me, and before you were successful? Didn't you?"

Like a ray of light it came on me that Jeremiah's very triumph was driving Diarmuid to revolt. For there was no kindness in his questions. They were hard and antagonistic. And their effect on Jeremiah was strange. For Jeremiah rose from his seat,

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facing his son as though he saw in that son not a human being whom he loved but a ghost to be vanquished.

"I did nothing of the kind. I wasn't such a fool," he said . . . nay, he shouted; and we all moved uneasily from our seats.

"I believe you did."

"Don't contradict me."

"I'm just saying what I think, as I've got a right to. I'm not in long clothes with a bottle in my mouth. I believe you did. And if you did, why then all this that looks so successful, and all this talk about it, is just another way of saying that you've lost the game."

"Don't talk to me like that," Jeremiah thundered, "or you . . . you'll be sorry for it."

"You just want to palm off your defeat on to me like the fox in the story, so you do. You want me to go on where you left off, failing more and more, so you do. And I amn't going to." He rose shaking with indignation. "I am going to smash dirty things just like you wanted to, and just like you didn't. I may be a fool, but I amn't going to take defeat at second-hand, so I amn't. For it's defeat, so it is; because you wanted to do things different yourself one time; and so did everyone else, or else they wouldn't write books about them, or put up rotten old plaster casts to the men who tried and tried and wouldn't take defeat."

"Jerry, don't talk to your father in that way."

Helen's voice cut clean across the clamour. For Jeremiah was silent and dismayed, a broken, for the moment an utterly broken, man. It had gone past fear with him. I moved to his side, for I would never have believed so vast a change could have come over him with such indescribable swiftness.

Diarmuid shook his mother off. He was beside himself with his emotion, his face pale, his eyes dark and threatening.

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"Why should he talk to me like that? Why should he laugh at Emmet and all the men who wouldn't be defeated by rotten things? Didn't he want to be like them once?"

"I tell you, you mustn't speak to your father like that. Do you hear me?"

"Oh, I know you're all against me. I know everybody will be against me, like he says. But they know I'm right, because it's what they think themselves, right down deep, so they do . . . and he knows, too, right down deep, and he's afraid of it, that's what it is."

"Jerry, you're to be silent this minute."

"Maybe I am, and maybe I'm not. But the game's not finished yet, and it's early to be crying out defeat. It's early to be crying out defeat." I believe the lad would have wept with the force of his passion, but for the completeness with which he was possessed by it. "I don't care what you do . . . you can all do what you like . . . but I'm going to try out the things you didn't. I won't give in if you did. I'm going to fight, and smash, and we're going to have an Ireland fit for people to live in, instead of them all going out of the country. I won't take defeat at second-hand like you want me to. It's how you failed. That's what it is. I . . ."

Helen took him by the shoulders and shook him silent. Then, his torrent of words having failed, the tears began to flow into his eyes; and, to mask them from us, he turned and swiftly fled from the room, followed by Helen.

For my part, I turned to Jeremiah. He stood before the fire, looking aimlessly across the room, a wreck of himself. His eyes were lustreless; his jaw hung loosely; his mouth was open; and great lines furrowed his cheeks. He was a figure of tragedy, like one who stood amid the wreck of all his hopes,

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over whom fear had passed and left in broken despair, taking all initiative and vitality from him.

I turned to Martin, who sat looking frightenedly and fearfully at his father, and motioned with my eyes for him to leave the room. Then I laid my hand on Jeremiah's arm. I said nothing; nothing could be said; so I let the silent gesture speak for me. And, without looking at me, Jeremiah spoke—so hollow and hopeless a speaking.

"William, if he had known all I went through he wouldn't have spoken to me like that. If he had known what I had to learn he wouldn't have spoken like that."

"I know, old friend, I know. He was carried past himself, and youth is cruel."

"It was for him I did it, that he shouldn't endure what I had to endure . . . to save him . . . and not go down myself. He never had to hunger as I did. He never lay wakeful of nights with lice and cold. He was never chased from street to street crying out against the God above him. I saved him all that, William. If he had known that, he never would have spoken so, I'm sure . . . not to me, William, that near went down. Do you think he would?"

"Never mind, dear old friend. Youth is cruel, and each generation has got to be sufficient to itself. He wants old things that are past and dead; but he's young and he'll grow wiser. I'm sure it'll all come right."

I took his arm in silence then, and we stood there, two old men, the common assault of youth . . . whether youth will or no, I suppose. I kept his arm in mine, till I resigned him to the more sacred charge of Helen.

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6.

Fortunately the Strike was over within a week or two—though the defeat it meant for the foolish men became a hollow thing for Jeremiah because of the sullen hostility it produced from Diarmuid. Yet, now that it was over, it was easier for a better understanding to grow between father and son. And for that I hoped.

For many weeks Jeremiah was a subdued man. He rallied slowly enough from the shock that had shaken him—shaken him, as I could see, to the depths of his being. There was more in that shock than I could pretend to understand. It came from something seated in his own past self; and therefore to me had all the appearance of things that are uncanny and unreasonable. Yet if I was bewildered, if I was even at times frightened at moods that seem to threaten changes and dissolutions in the personality of the man, I could by my presence comfort and assist him. He needed these things. He was as if he were rallying from a mortal, or nigh mortal, illness. It was mysterious that he should have been stricken so, yet so it was; and who can say what such an assault meant to one whose philosophy (to use the convenient term) was his life, the two things not being separate but one and identical, one being but the fabric of the other? And like an ill man he spared himself, leaving much to me, slowly bringing within his grasp again the activities without which he could not have lived.

Then one day he seemed filled with new vigour again. He was almost his normal self. So gay was I that I remarked on it; and he turned to me in the office with all his old command and keenness.

“Do you remember that little bicker I had with Diarmuid O’Hara?”

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I said I did. I was astonished at his open reference, for we had avoided the theme.

“Do you know, it was a good thing, too, so it was. It wasn’t lost. Sure. Helen tells me he has decided to go in hard for a chemistry course. Says the future of the country lies in chemistry. There’s some sense in that. There’s a mighty deal in that boy, mind you. He’s right, too. You couldn’t tell what new things mightn’t be done with developments in that line from this office. But you see how everything works round again? Man dear, look at: it never does to lose heart. Chemistry? Why, you can make facts into new facts with chemistry . . . little facts into big facts . . . one fact into a hundred facts. But that’s only by recognising facts, and by getting inside of them.”

I was delighted. And I told him that I thought that it was probably at Patrick Bronty’s advice the decision had been taken.

“Do you say so? Bronty’s a man with a head, do you know. I must see him. Do you know where is he living these times?”

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

I.

ON the very heel of Jeremiah's recovered brightness followed a shadow in desperate pursuit. One night towards the end of that year Diarmuid did not return till late. It was understood he was at some meeting in the Rotunda. Late as it was when he did return, he said little when he came; he sat warming himself before the fire, wrapped in silence, looking at the flames that I, too, could see where they leapt and fell in the deep reflection of his eye. For I watched him; and the others watched him. That none of us asked for news of the night signified our recognition that this flushed, bright-eyed and silent figure among us had been, and was, unusually stirred. A little thing; yet curious; for we had been speaking together until he came, and now silence had fallen like uneasy sleep upon us.

Jeremiah was the first to leave the fireside. He did not return. I did not realise how deep a life Diarmuid lived in his father's apprehension till I learnt that Jeremiah had at that late hour telephoned the paper to discover what had taken place at the Rotunda. It was not till the following morning I myself learnt that a national military force, entitled the Irish Volunteers, had been brought into being. What wonder that that figure had sat among us tense and silent, striking our comfortable speech into uneasy apprehension. We had been of our own little hour, happy in its recognition; and no doubt he had come among us conscious that he was the heir of history, his mind teeming with mighty memories, thrilled with the thought that now

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all baffled meanings were to take an ordered and martial purpose.

Little use to protest the wisdom of years while the youth of a nation is shaping itself into disciplined phalanxes. Jeremiah said nothing. I caught from him the appeal that I should become his mouth-piece, but I knew better than to wag a gray poll before the advance of youth. I waited before I would speak. Better to harness waters when they flow into a river than to attempt to dam them when they burst into a cataract. If Helen said anything I knew nothing of it. Neither could I perceive any effect.

For the months were full of drillings, and the hours of martial text-books. And then, as the months passed, these things, too, beat themselves into the custom of our days, and one gave no more heed to them than one would to a ballad singer strayed among the faded streets of our city. One hardly turned one's head to see the martial ardour passing by.

It was the effect of that ardour on our Diarmuid O'Hara that concerned me. For it had an effect not easy to explain. He had all the high elation of a lover, but, unlike a lover, there was no visible desire to communicate any part of his rapture to us of his household. Never was there so contained a lover or so cool an elation. The distinction, however, was this, that his elation seemed to cut him off more completely from his father than his previous hostility. The result was unaccountable. When father and son had been, as it were, staring at one another hostilely all their lives, there had been a kind of understanding between them. That queer truth was now altered. A change had come. The son stared no longer at his father, for he had his eye fixed in another direction. If the two of them had circled about one another, so to speak, hitherto, that circling had been a companionship; but now that Diarmuid circled no more, the result for Jeremiah was undescribably lonely. No one could work in close intimacy with

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Jeremiah without feeling the new hollowness that had come into his life; a hollowness that was as if a necessary part of himself had been abstracted from his life: a hollowness to which the drillings and marchings were only a picturesque background.

That was the result of the new martial order on Jeremiah. With me the result was that my earth was in shadow because the man who for thirty years had been the lightgiver of my earth was in eclipse. This was a different matter from Diarmuid's ordering of his own life. Let him order his life as he would; that was his concern; but none of us is at liberty to order his life to the suffering of others. Diarmuid was no longer a mere boy; and I determined that here was a matter on which I could speak to him roundly.

2.

I searched him out in his room, and did not trouble to wait a suitable occasion. But the door did not give to my hand. It was locked. What foolery was this, I thought; what queer bent had secretiveness now taken, if the young man could not withdraw to his own room without clicking a lock in the face of his household? I knocked vexedly, when I heard a voice asking who was without. Only when my identity was established was the key grated in the lock and I allowed to enter.

A new Diarmuid O'Hara stood before me, frowning in the waning evening light. So new and so wonderful a Diarmuid O'Hara was he that it was only by the utmost steadiness that I withheld myself from betraying my surprise. A spirit of the mountains or of the woods could not more magically have been substituted for the very human figure I had expected, than the vivid change that now for a bare moment caught my breath, and held me at the door, till he quickly closed it behind me.

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He was dressed complete in a uniform of soft green. Puttees of the same colour were wound about his legs. A peaked cap was on his head, also of the same colour. The colour was well chosen, and in the warm diminished light of that evening it transfigured the mortal flesh it clothed. The toils of brown papers strewn about his bed might explain the occasion of the transformation; and the abashed scrutiny with which he faced me was his acknowledgment of that transformation; but the transformation itself surpassed its occasion and mocked its acknowledgment. Ordinarily Diarmuid was neither careful nor careless about his dress; and my eyes, accustomed to the fact of his growth to manhood, had never rested on him to note or criticise him. But now, in this new presentment of him, I saw how comely he was framed. He was of more than middle height, yet seemed not as tall as he was because of the proportion of his parts and the eager athletic balance of the whole. No uniform, be sure, made him thus; but the present uniform consummately displayed it for the first time to my eyes.

All this I saw swiftly enough. Then I recovered the purpose of my visit, feeling its hopelessness more firmly than I yet had done.

I struck straight to the heart of my theme. "Diarmuid, you're hardly a boy any longer. Would you believe that there's a question I've had a wish to ask you for a good handful of years now? There is indeed. I've waited, as you might say, till this evening. It was little use putting it to you till now anyway. It wanted an answer that you could hardly provide till now, for you weren't old enough to find it. I wonder will you help me find it now. You see, I want to get to the heart of this difference . . . this distance . . . between you and your father. What is it, Diarmuid? We all see two people astonishingly like one another . . . in every sort of way. Only you two never seem to discover one another. I know I'm saying what will seem to you very odd, and perhaps

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foolish. I know you're thinking of that unhappy scene last year. But that doesn't explain anything. I want to get under that. Surely it ought not to be possible for two people, especially when they're father and son, to drift apart without some common human exchange between them."

I had continued on, feeling deeply the futility that this uniformed figure impressed on me. At first he had been disconcerted. Now he leant against the mantelpiece looking straight at me with incredible directness and coolness.

"I don't know about drifting," he said. "Who said we were drifting apart? I'm damned sure father never said it."

"I said it. I see it happening. It's now becoming worse than ever."

"Is it drifting because he wants one sort of thing and I want another sort of thing? There's nothing sharing between us, that's all; that's not drifting apart all the same."

The calm decision prompted me to say: "Do you despise your father so very much, then?"

He flushed, but did not falter. "The person that'd despise father you can put to one side. He doesn't count. Father has the whole world sorted out to his satisfaction, and that's more than you can say for most of the slobbs floating about in it. But that's not to say he has it sorted out to my satisfaction. Because he knows what he wants it doesn't follow it's what I want, do you know."

I seized upon the point he offered. "But how do you know he didn't at one time want all you now do, and that he didn't have to surrender it as a result of hard experience?"

"I wouldn't wonder. He'd be trying to forget it then, and it would only vex him to have me reminding him. Perhaps I do remind him, and perhaps that's what all the trouble's about sometimes. I don't believe father thought there was anything especially fine

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about having crocks of gold. He took other people's ideas about it instead of following out his own."

"Hm. So that's the trouble. He was all wrong, and you're all right."

"I didn't say that. I doubt would he say it himself if he really said what he thought. Perhaps there was no other way for him but that. But we've all got to start from the beginning, haven't we?"

"And reject all experience, my dear boy?"

He nodded. "How do we know it's going to be the same experience as before? Father doesn't expect me to wear all his old clothes, does he? Why should he expect me to wear all his old experiences?"

"Diarmuid, Diarmuid, I'm afraid you're an incurable romantic."

A shade of annoyance crossed his face. "That's like a literary lecture. They have all the sorts parcelled out neatly there—tragedy, comedy, farce, romance, realism, and all the rest of it. I never could make out what it meant; and I don't and won't try. We've been reading *Don Quixote*, and we're told it's comic. I think it's tragic. Some other fellow thinks it's a farce; and some other fellow romance; and some other fellow realism perhaps. But it's what goes on all the same. It's we that are different. It's what father would call a fact—only there are more facts, and other kinds of facts, do you know, than those he sees."

"Will I tell you what I think romantic? You won't mind if I do? Well, I call a pretty uniform romantic."

He laughed. "Do you know, I was thinking that before you came in. I was, then. Just that." He surveyed himself. "I was asking myself did I care more about this blessed outfit than about Ireland."

"Well, and what did you decide? Or didn't you decide anything?"

He frowned at me. "I decided that I did. Still, as it's company-orders, there's no help for it, and I've

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got to make mine the best outfit in the company. We'd a right to dress in our ordinary clothes, like the Boers, with all the one kind of hat for uniform effect. An ugly hat would be better yet . . . say like a baker's hat. There's no denying it'd look uniform, and that's all that's wanting. No chance then to forget the facts, for there'd be no romantic feathers on that bird."

"Tell me, how many would you get then, Diarmuid?"

"Not a great lot, I know. Not at once, anyway. It'd depend on the few how the many went, as it did evermore. I'm not such an idiot as to think you can count rightness in crowds, the way father pretends he does." He looked at me with steady penetration, then glanced down at his uniform with a slow restrained smile. "I'm a very fine bird in these feathers, all the same, you won't deny. They reveal my natural symmetry. There'd be no tolerating me if I took to walking abroad in them, and I'd become most unpopular with those that hadn't the same natural advantages."

"Ah, no, no," I protested, speaking out the heart of me. "They'd love you. They wouldn't be able to help it."

"Would they? You ask father would they. He knows something about facts. I believe people hate everything beautiful, unless it's at a distance. I believe they hate everything that's fine and right; and all the more because they know it's fine and right. It shews up the rottenness they live in—the rottenness they want to get content with. They'd like to drive their fist into the middle of anything beautiful, because it reminds them of too much. It's a kind of love gone mad . . . jealousy, I suppose. That's why I'm not a romantic, because I know that as surely as father does. He's right when he says folk don't like, and can't abide, a beautiful thing till it's too far away to bother them . . . safely in a book

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or somewhere. Where he's wrong is that he gives in to that, instead of smashing it up and not caring." He spoke with a great assumption of carelessness, but with real passion in his voice. Then he caught his breath, and held up a protesting hand. "I say, I don't mean that I'm beautiful and fine, you know."

"Though perhaps you are," I offered him quietly.

"Though perhaps I am," he echoed, looking ruefully at his uniform again. "It'd be so much simpler not to be. There's a lot to be said for the baker's hat, do you know."

There was silence between us. More than ever he had persuaded me that he bore Jeremiah's stamp, not merely in body, but in his mind also. Yet more than ever he persuaded me of the unbridgable distance between the two. I was saddened, saddened, saddened.

"Did you ever think how like your father you are?" I asked.

He flushed with pleasure; and then instantly (visibly before my eyes) fell on his guard.

"Is that so?" He reflected. "Then we can't meet without exposing ourselves, I suppose, and that means we must go different ways. Seems so, anyway." Then he gave out like a rebuke, with eyes that searched commandingly into mine: "I know if father were in want, and beaten to the world, where he'd go for help. It wouldn't be to Martin he'd go. And I know who would stand by him then; and that wouldn't be Martin either. I'm not saying he wouldn't wish to, the same Martin; but . . . well, there wouldn't be anything doing."

"That's a condition that's not likely to arise, Diarmuid. But I'm your father's old friend, and you, I like to think, are my new friend. I want . . . now, not when your father is without any other likely friend . . . to bring the two of you to an understanding before it's altogether too late."

"I say we do understand one another, and that's

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just the crux. I understand him, and he understands me."

"You think you understand him."

"Very well, I think I understand him. What I do understand, anyway, is that he can't help wishing to destroy all that I believe is right to do, and I can't help setting out to destroy all he believes in . . . or says he believes in, because I don't think he's so sure about it himself. He's not the same as other people. There's something queer about father . . . the way he wants to baffle me, for instance."

"There you are," I said triumphantly. "You see how the elements of true understanding, of love and tolerance, display themselves. Look, Diarmuid, will you come and talk with him, simply and quietly, avoiding all vexation? You're getting to be a man now . . . indeed, in many ways you are older than many men . . . and the chance may soon be lost beyond recall. Will you?"

He was plainly moved. I had never doubted his deep love for his father; and it was beyond doubt to me now. He walked up and down his room before me. Then he turned toward me. A strange expression in his eyes puzzled me.

"Now?" he asked.

"Very well; now."

"Will I come down in this outfit, or will I take off this outfit so as to talk to him . . . which?"

I shrugged my shoulders at the hopeless alternative.

3.

So there I was, more desperately than ever set between these two. Jeremiah's love for his son was more than an ordinary father's love for a son, for in Diarmuid O'Hara (as he always fully and formally called him) he loved yearningly his own youth. Diarmuid was more than a son to him; he was a

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passion in his blood and a dream in his mind. All his thought for life—for that life beyond life, for the perpetuation of which we all turn in our stricken years—centred in that boy. And, for his part, Diarmuid as passionately loved his father. I thought often of his words to me; and the more I thought of them the truer I saw them. Had Jeremiah fallen into poverty or other desperate need, nothing would have given the young man greater joy than to undertake his care and championship. Yet worlds were not more surely distanced by space than these two, swinging each in his own orbit, with a treasure of love of which I could discover no visible exchange.

Where there is love there is understanding, yet neither could I discover any visible exchange of that understanding. That it existed I did not doubt. Especially after Diarmuid's confident words to me I did not doubt it, for all the lack of any display of it. Not to doubt it, explained many things to me.

I noticed, for example, a quiet elation in Jeremiah these days. Even the first sight of Diarmuid in his uniform did not seem to disturb him. He even checked Helen's modulated sarcasm.

"Let him alone," he said to her when Diarmuid had gone out. "Urge him on, my dear, rather than check him. The faster he goes the sooner he'll turn. The farther he travels on that road the better he'll go on the other he has found; for he has his two fine feet to a safer journey now, and a better."

"I don't know what other that might be," she said. "I don't see anything but drillings these times."

"Drillings cannot last for ever, do you know." He put his hand on her shoulder, and drew her to him. "If you want to check him anywhere, check him in his chemistry."

That was the cause of the quiet elation, for Diarmuid now worked indefatigably at chemistry. For Diarmuid to work indefatigably at any thing was a

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sign. Never could it have been an acceptance. Had I seen him labouring at trigonometry, I would have looked around for some space he expected to measure. Therefore when I saw him labouring at chemistry I was interested. It was part of Jeremiah's understanding that he also should be interested. But, while I was curious, looking about for the unexpected, Jeremiah was frankly contented.

He had cause for his content. Diarmuid was working with remarkable application. He was for all the world like a miner digging his pegged claim with eager eyes for gold. Nothing of the methodical determination he gave to his other studies was visible about this part of his chosen course. And so a new kinship was established between father and son; for when I commented on this to Jeremiah his reply was shrewd in its penetration.

"Sure," he said. "What would you expect else? Hasn't he just that class of a mind? He's getting down to facts now, you see. He was never one to take the outside show of the world at its face value, like most folk do. He wants to take it all to pieces, and put it together again to his own satisfaction. Facts are not what look to be facts. You must pull things to pieces, and then you find the real facts. Can't you see the way his mind's working? Because if you cannot, I can very well. He wants to get to the foundation of things, and then when he gets there he'll work them up again his own way. It's what I had to do myself when I was just where he is now. I had to find out what was, and not what looked to be; and now he has got his two feet to the same road. Sure."

When I had surrendered hope of bringing them together, here they were, father and son, on one side and the other, speaking to me with the same voice. For when I answered Jeremiah: "That may be; but what should he see in chemistry of all things? There's some bent in his mind, no doubt. No doubt

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at all about that. Diarmuid doesn't aimlessly turn up any odd thing, whatever class of a mind he may have,"—he retorted :

" Bent enough, William, my decent man. 'Tisn't only chemistry, from what I see. Chemistry's only the beginning for Diarmuid O'Hara. He's now beginning to see what I've seen for this long time, that the things that are possible for the future are different from the things that were possible for the past. Sure. Do you mind the way we used to watch Bronty with his tubes and bulbs and blue flames ? I thought a bit of coal was a bit of coal, and a hard fact enough ; but he shewed me it wasn't a fact at all, but a whole collection of much bigger facts, dyes and poisons and medicines and the dear knows what else. There's the turning of the world inside out in that. There he was, doing with the hard world what I started to do with the people in it, turning them inside out and getting to the real people within. Not what looked to be, but what was, And do you know, when I saw that, I wished I could begin all over again, and tear the new things to pieces and put them together again in new forms and shapes . . . from this office, William, from this office. Not books, mind you, not words, but facts all the time that have been mastered and put to service. It wasn't to be, well. I had neither the time nor the chance ; and it was past my day ; but now, you see, Diarmuid O'Hara is setting out to do it, the way I always said he would."

So said the father. Some days after this I deliberately created an excuse to search out the son with no other intention than to compare notes. Little I thought to be answered almost in the same words.

I constructed the scene with rare craft. It was not till I turned from his room that I stopped suddenly to say :

" You're a great man at chemistry these times. What's the cause of that ? May I know ?"

" Do you ask why ?" he answered, with a swift

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glance at me, and a flicker of his lip. "I'm not sure I rightly know. It's not only chemistry, you see. That's the beginning only, though maybe the best part of the beginning. Padraic Bronty says the future of the world will first be worked out in the laboratory; and that's right, too, though perhaps not in the way he thinks."

"Oh, is that so? And what way does he think, and what way do you?"

"Hadn't you better ask him direct? I'm not his keeper, do you know, though he was one time thought to be mine. . . . I'm sure," he added quickly, "he's thinking only of Ireland, just as I'd like to . . . to make Ireland a decenter place for a fine stock."

I looked at him blankly. "How?" I asked. "I don't see the connection . . . not quite."

I wondered if he was too clear about it himself, for he hesitated, and then spoke slowly, with either great reserves of thought, or as feeling his way. "Well, chemistry's not romance, I suppose; but with chemistry and applied physics it looks as if, if we had the proper people working at them, we could turn the world inside out all the same. And in Ireland we've got a clear field to work in, where others haven't."

Conceive my delight at his words. "That's the very saying of your father. Do you know that?"

"Is it? But I'm not thinking of gombeen men. If England got a hold of new discoveries first she'd use them for turning everybody into slaves . . . us first and most of all, so she would. We want folk who won't be always thinking of turning them into crocks of gold, but into making Ireland the best place to live in that ever there was. If there's all in it that there seems, we might be able to pull things to pieces and make a new shape of the whole outfit. . . . I suppose you think that romantic. Maybe it is. But that's why I'm sweating at chemistry all the same."

"I don't think anything of the kind; I'm thinking of other things altogether," I answered.

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4.

Then into this happy hopefulness there came a rapid succession of events that whirled us away to entirely new issues.

Every Sunday was spent by Diarmuid drilling and route-marching. We never saw him at Mass. He cycled to early Mass at the Pro-Cathedral, and seldom returned till late. The mere physical effect on him was considerable. Helen herself was reconciled to the military order of his days when she saw the bronzed, hardy son who took shapely completeness during these summer months—though she exerted all her influence against permitting Martin to be drawn into the tide that ran about him.

When, therefore, one Sunday in late July a neighbour fluttered in to tea with news that there had been terrible happenings—guns had been run in at Howth, and the Volunteers had overpowered the police, and were marching on Dublin fully armed—all our thoughts at once went to Diarmuid.

“Such things,” simmered our visitor indignantly, ridiculous, over-dressed figure that she was. “Such defiance of all authority. I don’t know what we’re coming to.”

Helen gravely sympathised with her; urged her to rest herself on the couch; and finally put her to rout by never permitting the sympathy to be turned the other way. Then, when she had gone, Jeremiah burst out angrily:

“Diarmuid O’Hara’s in this if it’s true.”

Helen replied: “Mrs. Doran’s a dear soul, but she came in to exult. I’m glad we didn’t give her the chance.”

Not till Diarmuid returned was the news confirmed. He gave little satisfaction. The hour was late, and he was tired and grimly exultant. Jeremiah left the

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contest to Helen, wisely; but her attack wrought no change on that dusty uniform.

" 'Twas no use having Volunteers without arms, and by the same token we proved to ourselves we could do things. There'll be a wonderful change from this out." That was all the defence he would permit himself to make. "They, and their precious orders that we mustn't sneeze till we're let," he scoffed. "That's a page turned over anyhow; and likely it's a new book altogether."

Little avail to argue with such a mood, so I asked :

"Do you say that the military appeared?"

"Precious little good it did them. We fooled them up to their eyes, and by now the guns are all safe. So they went off and shot unarmed men in a crowd. About the class of thing they're fit for."

5.

I slept little that night. The following morning I read the news. The previous night we had all been tense and irritable. The only clear brain among us had been Diarmuid's; and his clarity had only irritated us by assumptions outside our knowledge. We had gone to bed with raging confused minds; and I had carried away with me the conviction, certainly of Jeremiah's hostility, and of Helen's also in milder degree. What was my surprise, therefore, to find the whole household before me buried in the daily Press. As I came in Jeremiah handed me his paper, and stood with his back to us, looking out of the window.

I read the news, and as I read, the blood in my veins was stirred. Here was a national issue as there had not been in my time. To forbid a nation the right to bear arms; to turn out military when that right was upheld; and then for that military, in re-

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venge (it appeared) for their defeat, to shoot innocent citizens—intolerable . . . monstrous. But for my years, I would myself have enrolled among the Volunteers.

I looked up at Jeremiah, who had turned and stood over me.

"What do you think of it?" I asked him, not daring to trust myself to more.

"Bad, bad," he said. "Makes you feel as if you want to . . ." His face became suddenly flushed with blood, and his hand, that hung beside me, was clenched till the skin on the knuckles was white. Then he called across the room in a voice like a challenge in battle: "And how's Diarmuid O'Hara this morning after his wars?"

Diarmuid looked critically at his father, and laughed softly. "I feel good," he said.

"No wonder for you. You did well yesterday."

Battle called across to battle from father to son. Oh, that this hour could have lasted! Torn between mood and mood, I knew not whether to rage at our indignity or to rejoice in the understanding that had come between father and son. I was called out of my confusion by Helen's voice saying:

"Well, you had better come to breakfast, both of you." Her voice sang with the blessed music of a heart of joy.

All that day Jeremiah was neglectful of work. I had never in my years known so complete a national unity. Irish men and women were no more men and women, but parts of a single whole annealed in a common emotion. All the ordinary differences of mood and temperament were idle breathings on the glass. And Jeremiah passed from one to another, sharing and receiving, his tall figure moving among his fellows like a beacon of war, while he surprised his grave friends by the violence of his sentiments.

That evening he returned early, and at once searched out Diarmuid.

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"And how's Diarmuid O'Hara now?" he asked merrily.

"He's still good," came the equally merry reply.

"Working away to-day? Guns all safe?"

"You may say so. We lost nineteen all told. But against that we got seven off the military."

"Hullo! Lost on the deal? But no harm. 'Twas a good day."

"Ay; but we gained on the cash value."

And the two of them laughed heartily; and we all laughed. Happy hour. Then Jeremiah turned on Martin.

"And what about you, Martin?" he challenged.

"I joined up to-day."

"Good man. Good man."

Oh, that this hour could have lasted. Save for certain moments, that grew longer as they recurred, when Jeremiah was caught in the trammels of his life-long occupations, it continued for ten days. Father and son might have been two boys together. Scarce a cloud darkened the perfect understanding of their exchanges—an understanding too complete to require many words. Diarmuid did not search out his father as Jeremiah searched out his son, I noticed; but when they were together like called to like, and as fellows they answered one another. That was, perhaps, natural. For Diarmuid was not anything other than his habitual self, whereas Jeremiah was unlike anything I had known of him, save that he was always oddly reminiscent of himself. They did not bear their happiness apart selfishly, but bestowed it on us like sunshine, making us all happy together—gay and happy together. It was a beautiful week in my life, even while we heard the whole country stirring without.

But it was not to last. It was broken in one moment violently; and after that one moment it was as though it had never been.

One afternoon Jeremiah put down the telephone,

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and rose from his desk, pacing to and fro across the office in deep thought. Then he came over to my desk.

"William," he said, and his voice was grave with care, "we'll have to change many a thing in this office before many weeks are older. They're just after telling me from the paper that England has declared war on Germany, and that means all Europe will be putting knives into its own vitals. A serious thing for us, mind you. We'll have to heed things closely enough if we're to protect the interests of this office."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

I.

THE Great War fell among us like an explosion, driving us asunder and apart. During the first few weeks, and indeed for the first few months, we stood asunder indeterminedly, not clearly knowing the great difference it had brought to us.

Helen's only thought was for the folly of it all. "Indeed, William," she said to me when I read out the news at night, "if that's the best you men can do. . . . Making powder of one another and misery for the world. . . . And all for what? Never talk to me about the rights of little nations. I've heard you men talk before. You may fool one another, but you won't fool me. Surely it's time you resigned the whole business of government."

"You'd never believe, William," Jeremiah said, each of them using me for a better playful rebound to the other, "that it's women that are the maddest of them all now. Flaming furies they are . . . for others to fight."

She looked at him for a cool moment, then smiled at me. "That's true enough. Flaming furies . . . for others to fight . . . and the older the worse. But that's the worst indignity of all. For who contrived the situation that made us so? Not we. It was you men, with your habit of never looking what you want in the face from the outset. If we women had wanted a war we'd have been so frank about it from the beginning that the world would have been prepared to prevent it."

So, as she moved with dignity through the movements of her life, her thought was ever for the

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misery caused, her very asperity and sharpness edged with tenderness.

2.

For his part Jeremiah's whole care was in his office. Martin was now a young man of nearly twenty-five, well-groomed and grave, with a practical business sense sharply developed; and he took his share of the responsibilities with his father and myself. The business required our joint energies under Jeremiah's direction, for our continental business was now cut away, and, in order to revise all our undertakings in the changed conditions, and to create new outlets for forms of enterprises that were now no longer possible, demanded great and detailed labour. To reconstruct is harder than to construct. Hitherto his enterprises had conducted themselves under his guiding hand. Now everything had to be changed, or was liable to be changed; and we laboured early and late as we had not laboured at the beginning. For each concern had to be taken in turn, one after the other.

Jeremiah thoroughly enjoyed it, to be sure. He rose to the hour, masterful and compelling. I spoke of anxiety. He would not hear of it. He swelled through all his various enterprises like a vast spirit, lifting each to his own mood of confidence as if they were, not inanimate organisations, but parts of himself. Not in his earliest days of fullest vigour had I known him so triumphant, so conquering. Fatigue and he were strangers. He was now nearly sixty; but his abundant life flowed out of that office in which he now again lived all his hours as it had never flowed from the flood-tide of his maturity. He left me weary, helplessly struggling in the rear of his onward stride.

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"Fudge, man," he rallied me when I complained. "Never talk to me of limited outlets. There never were in our time the chances that there are to-day. The greater the disorder the greater the chances. What do you say, Martin?"

"I don't know. I'm listening and I'm learning."

"Good. Never leave off learning and never leave off listening. And keep your eye skinned. Do you mind the unwritten rule of this office?"

"Facts," laughed the apt pupil dryly.

"You may laugh, my son. It's good to laugh at facts, for that proves you're on happy terms with them; but 'tis better to learn from them. What are the facts now, both of you? Ay, just this minute, when everybody's drunk with words, what are the facts that are now, and will be at the end, the masters of us all? Aren't they just this, that out of every war there came a bunch of broken heroes, whom everybody threw up their caps to, and then flung on the scrapheap out of the road, while they bowed down before the other men who came out fresh as paint with handsome fortunes? . . . What's the matter, William."

I had risen. "Really, Jeremiah," I said, and I was tired, "this is too much."

His brow drew down and his eyes were scornful. "You're blaming me . . . what for? I didn't ask these to be the facts, and I didn't make them so. I simply recognise them. You don't like them? Sure. I mightn't either; and I mightn't like the day to be made of twenty-four hours and the year of twelve months. But the sooner I do the more punctual I'll be, and the fewer people will mistake me for a lunatic. I mightn't wish stone walls to be hard; but that's no reason why I should butt my head into them. Sit down, man, and have sense, and tell me where I'm wrong, if I am wrong."

I know I could not argue with him; and besides

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I was tired. "It will be different with this war," I said. "Can you tell me of any war that was like this . . . in magnitude or in essence?"

He looked at me fully and intently, and spoke quietly. "I don't know about history, it's true, and if what truly happened ever got into books I doubt very much. But I'll give an odd guess that there never was a war of which the same wasn't said. And I'll give another odd guess that the finish of this will be like the finish of every other. Of course, I might be wrong; and the world might come to an end in the morning. We might fly in the blue sky like the birds; and birds might sing beautiful songs in new parliaments. Sure. And if all that happens I'll be wrong . . . and it's quite likely I won't grieve to be wrong. But if that happens the facts will all be different; and in the meantime, my dear man, not wishing to butt my head into stone walls, occupations like that not being my fancy taste, I take the world as I find it and I put it to good use. I had my little time . . . but no matter. Let's talk of what is."

I had my own thoughts, but I determined to say no more. Martin it was who continued the conversation.

"There are a lot of people who believe what William says. Oh, I know there are some cranks in this country who are out against everything. I mean the others. I mean the statesmen making the speeches. You think, father, they're playing a deep game?"

Jeremiah had turned to face the grave enquiry; and now he laughed—a rich, soft, contented laugh embroidered on the fabric of a chuckle.

"Look at, Martin, my dear son, never find fault with the folk who make speeches. Never even so much as criticise 'em. They're our best friends. If you start to criticise 'em you'll conclude by being

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discontented with 'em; and then you're on the high road to losing their service. No doubt, some of them are rogues, right enough. Others are fools. And there are some who are not fools, but who like the sensation of swinging through life in speeches—especially their own speeches. There are all sorts; and they keep changing, do you know. Sure. The rogue to-day may be to-morrow's fool, according as the public fancy in words changes—and 'tis ever changing. So what's the use examining? Better to stand by what we know, and what is sure; and the men who talk are our best friends, for under the cover of their words the real work of the world goes forward as it did evermore, and it never goes forward so lustily as when the cover is as plentiful as it is these times. I'd as soon have you complain of the climate as the speechmen."

"But I wasn't complaining of them. I was asking were they simply fooling us."

"That's complaining. Besides, who's 'Us'?" He was silent a moment, as if awaiting a reply; and, while he was silent, he scrutinised in turn each of the two faces his silence had drawn toward him. "It's our business to see we're not Us." He spoke now no more in humour. "The folk you call Us will be thrown to the scrapheap; the folk you call Us always were; and the scrapheap's a draughty sort of place to be. It's not to be recommended."

I watched the grave and thoughtful face of Martin. Then I broke the conversation.

"Well, and what do you propose now to do? You seem very hopeful. I'm not. Half the business is cut away, and it's development ruined by this mad upset. You've evidently some plans. I'd like to hear them, if I may."

"That's talking now. What do we propose to do in order that we mayn't be thrown to the scrapheap, but come out respected and regarded in the end. Say the war lasts another year. . . ."

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I expressed my incredulity.

"Kitchener says three years, and he trained himself to his business like I trained myself to mine. I'm only allowing for one year. That means more armies. Sure. That means, then, more uniforms and more wool. Mark down wool. Then there's food. . . ."

That night, too, he kept us till a late hour, as had now again become the rule.

3.

This was in the Autumn of 1914. Within one month he had founded the War Necessities Development Association. His reasons for the choice of that unwieldy title were very characteristic of the man. For his wide intelligence omitted nothing, and he never entered any field without clear eyes engaging its possibilities.

It was to Martin he spoke, by way of frank instruction. "We're not going to develop anything . . . not at the present time, anyway, and never if we can help it. Consequently, we must say that we are. Say so in your title, and folk'll believe you. No need to go into War necessities, for 'tis clear that the war can't go on without the necessities that we're to help develop. But there'll always be some folk apt to pick a hole. I've met that sort. Never content but to find fault when others are doing their best. Not quick enough to be first, nor daring enough to decide what to do, and therefore always looking about for an odd stone to peg. They'll write letters to the papers; they'll snarl in public places; but they'll never do a hand's turn themselves. We've got to be prepared against that sort; and so I've given them a nice long lump of a title to fall over. I wonder how many people'll read

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further in any letter or article when they came across that title. I wouldn't wish to be any person using that title many times in an article. And it's not possible to make any convenient word out of the first letters either. Not that people aren't wild enough with words by this time; but 'tis always well, Martin, to be ready with your guard."

This business took him constantly to and fro from England. For already he had seen that such war enterprises were destined to failure unless they were established in England. For weeks at a time he was absent; and for the first time since his visit to America he became a stranger in his home.

He could hardly have been aware of his absence often, if one may judge from the fact that he was often absent from his home even when in it. The strangeness of a new open world for him to practise upon absorbed him wholly. As the months passed with no hope of conclusion to the war, and with ever increasing expenditures in the purchase of its necessities, the War Necessities Development Association grew wider and wider in the scope of its activity. It grew completely out of my sight. I knew that specialists were employed to investigate likely new requirements, and as these specialists were generously lent to Government Departments (some of them were subsequently knighted for their services), it followed that the War Necessities Development Association was always very well informed, and in a strong position to make use of its information.

Within six months, so rapidly did events move in those perilous hours, the War Necessities Development Association became a Parent Company. A brood of companies were fostered under its care and with its capital. "The English law is a beautiful thing," Jeremiah gravely remarked. "You mayn't conduct two brothers' companies with the one capital. That's illegal. But you may conduct a

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family with the father's blood. That only proves what a responsible business it is to be a father, do you know. It's a touching tribute." He had cause for good humour. The scope of his activities were out of all proportion to the capital employed in them, with the result that the same money earned many profits. And as the War Necessities Development Association was even lent money from the Government (on credit) for the conduct of its business, the result was enough to justify the freest humour. When the War had broken Jeremiah was a wealthy man; but by the end of the following year he had nearly doubled that wealth.

"What did I tell you?" he said, displaying a paper in which his zeal was extolled, his services acknowledged. "Will you read that? You may laugh, but I'm a public hero, all the same. That's because I'm on the height of success. But we're only beginning. Another year or so. . . ."

This was on his return to Dublin, after an absence of some weeks, for the Christmas of 1915.

4.

The Great War that at first had seemed to change so much had, in fact, changed nothing. It had only intensified all original habits and tendencies. It had renewed Jeremiah's vigour, and had enabled him to undertake vast labour, careless of fatigue. One would have thought that he must have been weakened, at his years, by the energy he threw into his work. Instead of which, whatever fatigue he might have felt, he seemed physically to flourish. He brimmed over with good humour. He was robust of health.

On the other hand, Diarmuid also was intensified. I saw much of him these times, in Jeremiah's

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absences. I wished to see much of him, for I was fearful for him. To speak frankly, it was not a light thing, now, to defy an Authority that had equipped itself with new terrors of the law. Yet he drilled constantly and openly. He spent the week-ends in uniform—sometimes campaigning on the Dublin Hills in skirmishes, and sometimes to his mother's and my alarm skirmishing openly in the streets of Dublin.

Little wonder that we were alarmed. The little obscure journals that he read were being suppressed one by one; and he exulted as they re-appeared in new forms, reading them proudly in public vehicles where they could be seen by all. Men were even being cast into prison for opposing War Recruitments, and both Helen and I knew that he frequented such meetings. So we lived in constant apprehension. I knew it was my duty to speak to him; but so proudly, so grimly, did he bear himself that he left me neither hope nor opportunity.

It was not as if he was now supported by any strength of feeling in our nation. The Volunteers that on the outbreak of the Great War had mustered in their hundreds of thousands through the land were now a feeble few.

The Great War had swept them away as a vast cataclysm obliterates the boundaries of hearth and fane, with the result that a handful of angry mortals were left protesting the existence of those boundaries against the clear evidence of all our eyes. Indeed, one could but admire them (perhaps wonder was the greater half of one's respect) for it is true that the boundaries had once been there. Yet I did not see that anger could restore what the flood had swept; and there is a moment when faith looks uncommonly like a simple lack of reality. With the towering figure of Jeremiah by one's side, his feet planted on most substantial earth, one felt jealous of the angry and faithful few (to accord them all they

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asked) who had stolen from Diarmuid, our Diarmuid O'Hara, his hard, if perverse, sense of reality.

There could not have been a greater contrast than between a father so triumphant and a son who kept so woe-begone a company. One was courted by the great, and mounted to higher and higher heights of success; the other was swept from obscure meetings by the police. The contrast haunted one. It depressed and darkened one's mind. Was it for this that Jeremiah had begotten a son in his very likeness? Had this father and son, in their broken likeness, struggled together, to fall at last so far apart? Such were the questions I, the friend and lover of each, put to myself in my affliction.

Whatever my trouble, Diarmuid asked no pity. Pity would have been an impiety before a pride so assured and so casual. One of the summer evenings in 1915, while Jeremiah and Martin were in London, Helen and I combined forces as the three of us sat in the garden to taste the cool of the evening. He was neither anxious to discuss nor was he anxious to withdraw from discussion; but it was not possible to stir a hair of his composure.

"But," I argued, "you're a hopeless handful. In plain terms of reason, Diarmuid, who are the Irish nation? Who constitute it? A loud few in a backyard, or the overwhelming mass of the people?"

"The Irish nation are those who express the idea of the nation," he replied, and the pause before his reply heightened his composure.

"And who do that, Jerry?" said Helen, looking up tranquilly from her needlework. "You?"

"Not those, anyway, who express the idea of some other nation." Scorn rang in his voice, but was not expressed in his manner. "The first stage in finding out what a thing it is, is to make sure it's not some other thing."

"And the next stage is?"

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"I suppose to find out what itself is, and to believe in it. Then you've got a fact."

His queer elusive smile showed a moment on his face at this echo of his father. I turned from him to Helen, but she did not lift her eyes from her work. Seeing that she had no wish to continue I returned where I began.

"That's queer doctrine you expressed a minute ago, do you know. Do you really mean that half-a-dozen . . . or any mere handful . . . may be a nation against a whole people? How far is that going to lead you? I'd a notion there was such a thing as the rule of the majority."

"It's what we never got in this country."

"Never mind. I know all about that, but I believe in everything in its place. At the present moment I'm putting the present position to you, do you see."

He stretched himself back in his long chair, and looked at me from under the lids of his eyes.

"So you're going to find out what's right by counting the heads in a crowd. There are some people do that, sure. It's not that they don't know what's right, I suppose, but they failed to make it work. Then they took to counting heads because it's easier, even if they saved themselves, some of them, by laughing at the crowd. They'd get bad dreams if they didn't laugh, I suppose, for all the critics agree there's a saving grace in laughter. Where are you going to find what's right if it isn't in those who express the idea of it? Or maybe there isn't such a thing? And maybe 'twas only for the fun of it fools for seven hundred years went out to fight and die in Ireland, never caring did they win or lose, but only to do what they couldn't escape? And maybe 'twas only for another stroke of fun we've all agreed to call them great men and heroes and martyrs, and to stick up pictures of them

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on all the walls of Ireland, including a medallion to Emmet in that room up there?"

"Why do you, whenever I refer to the present, always speak of the past?"

"Because it isn't past. Not while the pictures remain on the walls, and the histories aren't burnt. And even then not while the mere handful remains."

"Haven't we got to recognise facts, my dear boy?"

"Or we've got to make facts recognise us. That has been done once or twice before with tolerable success . . . by those who were too simple to call failure success."

"And do you, Jerry, think you've got a monopoly of right?" Helen looked up again, and laid her work down in her lap.

There was no reply. I hear that silence still, with the song of a thrush playing upon it as upon a harp.

"I asked you a question, son."

"I think I've got a monopoly of what's right for me," he said softly to her, and the hushed rebuke, the quiet humility of his love for her, caught us in a wave of tenderness, and sounded a period for that part of our argument.

It was I who first returned to the attack. "And what about the larger right, the right for the world?" I rebuked him rather to plead with him. "Doesn't it savour of selfishness to think of our own small injuries in the face of great international wrong? Haven't we before us the utterances of responsible statesmen that here is a great war undertaken to establish for ever the rights of small nationalities to decree for themselves their own destinies? Or are you suggesting that all these great words are only humbug and craft? Do you think that?"

"What I think is"—he still lay stretched at ease,

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but his eyes opened full wide—"that we won't know till the end of the war, at the settling-up, whether they're humbug or not; and then it'll be too late for us. In the meantime we can only judge by the records of the speakers; and those same records are bad . . . you may say, rotten."

"But those utterances are being pledged in a world's blood. If you aren't in love with the spokesman, can't you at least respect the value of a great principle when it's receiving that splendid testimony?"

"It's easy to see"—his eyes closed again—"you haven't been at any of our meetings. We never stop quoting these speeches. That's why the police are after us. The only people allowed to say these things are the people who don't mean them. The people who mean them are batoned on the minute. Father was quite right there. But it doesn't matter. It only makes one harder. We not only respect the sentiments. We'd a right to respect them, seeing we've been saying them for so long ourselves. But we believe them, do you see. We're going to do the thing father said was never allowed. We're going to do the thing folks say. We're going to mix up his two worlds . . . for the fun of the experiment, if you like. Perhaps the pictures will jump down from the walls then. You never know."

"What do you mean?" I asked him sharply.

"Oddly enough, what I say. Now's our time. Everything's in confusion, and the greater the confusion the greater the chances. It's the very time for mere handfuls who believe in the pictures on the walls, it seems to me."

"And what grand thing are you going to do, may I ask?"

"I don't know. But wait and see."

I laughed because I was uneasy. Under his casual manner there was a strange intensity that made me

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uneasy; and Helen was looking at him in steady silence.

"That's the historic phrase for doing nothing, isn't it?"

"For those who don't mean to do anything it may be."

5.

Helen and I were left troubled, yet where could we discover release for our anxiety? Diarmuid was too clear-eyed to be gainsaid; and Jeremiah's hours were too crowded with schemes that lifted him from height to height for him to attend. The presiding genius of the War Necessities Development Association, thinking of the supply of millions, could hardly be expected, I suppose, seriously to heed an amateur army of hundreds, even though his own son were a captain of that army.

When I spoke to him he dismissed the subject. "Man dear, have sense. You and Helen are distressing yourselves about nothing. Sure, Diarmuid O'Hara's stubborn, but he's not a lunatic. I give him another year, till he takes his science degree. Then we'll have him, and by that time he'll have sweated out his fancies like others before him. I know; and anyway we cannot do anything before then. In the meantime his toy soldiers'll do him no harm. Indeed, they'll keep him out of the slaughter in France. He's safer as he is, so we'll give him his head for a bit. For how can I be blamed if one of my sons shames me by opposing the war? You see, that's useful, too; for I've other ends for my sons than to have them slaughtered. Especially Diarmuid O'Hara. So don't disturb yourself. I've thought it all over."

That was all I could get from him. The truth was that his mind was fully engaged elsewhere.

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Perhaps also he feared that his good-humour, so essential to his plans, might be endangered, and therefore he would not permit disturbing themes to enter his thoughts.

The result was that he not only brushed the subject from his thought, but seemed even to avoid Diarmuid himself. Father and son each went his road, one courted by Authority, the other hounded by the same Authority. Each knew well the road he went, knew well why he went, knew well what he wanted, and had shaped his purposes into a reasonable scheme of action—which was not, of course, with either of them, a reasoned plan from which the will or the blood took its origin, but was simply a faith, say a philosophy, that sought to explain, and probably masked as much as explained, the origins hidden in confused motives of the blood or the will. Each was singularly clear-eyed, and as singularly grim of humour. That is not to say that either of them knew the causes that had made him what he was; but then, as none of us know that, neither of them was remarkable in that particular form of ignorance. Their singularity was their common freedom from illusions. Of neither of them could it be said that he nursed any fond thing that he was not willing to drag out under the white light of grimdest searching. Each (with the same quality of sight, and with the same lights that changed and shifted in the same blue depths) looked critically on the world for the framing of his estimate. Each startled me with the same sudden penetrations that seemed to drag at one's inmost secrets.

This was as true of the son as it was of the father. I had once childishly thought of Diarmuid as an idealist and contrasted him with the realist that I judged Jeremiah to be; but I now saw that I could have transposed the titles with as apt an application and with as much sense in the meaning of words. Their minds were the same; their minds moved under

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the same law and were urged by a common ruthless purpose. And yet to what different conclusions had they come; and yet to what different places had they been brought; and yet they never met, but seemed rather to avoid one another—this father courted in high places and this son chased in the lowest.

All through these anxious months, while the war thundered in Europe, and even as they went their different ways, both Jeremiah Hare and Diarmuid O'Hara taunted one with their common likeness. No word can better describe the effect on one's mind than that word "taunted." For it was a likeness that (to me at least, in contact with both) taunted first, and haunted afterwards. It was so not merely in their agreements, but in their disagreements also. And it left me puzzled and tired.

During that summer, for example, we buried one of our national heroes. He was an old Fenian, and I had little faith in the methods of his like. Yet he had suffered, and he had dared. A scholar and man of culture, he had gone out in a mad and hopeless rebellion. The inevitable result had been that he had been thrown into jail, where he had suffered incredibly, and had been liberated, after many years, a broken, ruined man. Now he was dead, and we brought home his remains from America for a national funeral. All our history would have been outraged had we failed in this last duty to one who had written his name honourably on its page.

Yet when I returned from the funeral I felt, instantly, Jeremiah's criticism. All that day, and for days before, he had been restless . . . almost as if he resented the funeral, and were afraid of it. He had never referred to it. Indeed, it seemed to me that he would have turned on me in anger had I been so foolish as to make reference; for it would have threatened his contentment with the world. And now his eyes followed me about the room till they brought me opposite him, when he spoke.

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“What brought you out to-day?” he said. “How many do you suppose, of all that were out to-day, really believed in what that man did? Eh? I amn’t saying he was right or wrong; but how many’d try again what he tried? The devil a one. Then what’s the good of fooling ourselves?”

“If we cannot approve all he did we can at least honour the man,” I said.

“Honour the man, is it?” He laughed harshly, for he was, indeed, much unlike his usual happy self. “You mean bamboozle ourselves. Well, I amn’t bamboozled for one. I’ll watch what they’ll all do to-morrow morning, and I’ll go one better because I’m not bamboozled. What folk do is what folk honour, as I make it out.”

I did not pursue the subject further, for he was disturbed as I could plainly see. Yet that night Diarmuid came in to me. He was in uniform, for he had been with the guard of honour.

“Didn’t I see you at the funeral to-day?” He asked shrewdly. “What brought you out? The same thing that made you put up that medallion. I wouldn’t wonder.”

“I suppose so, Diarmuid,” I said feebly, crushed by this assault from both father and son.

“You were right all the same. I wonder how many of those who were out to-day really would like to do what O’Donovan Rossa did. That’s what it really comes to in the end. It’s mighty easy going to funerals. The tide’s turning, anyway, and that’s the great thing. Most of those who were out to-day will forget about it in a week; but, mind you, there’ll be some that won’t forget, and it’s they that’ll matter. You mind, father once said the living employed the dead. Well, now, I wouldn’t wonder if sometimes the dead didn’t employ the living. If you’re talking to him you can tell him that.”

Such correspondences were always assailing me. It

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is only necessary to give one other example, for it concerned the ideals around which the Great War was being waged.

When, that eve of Christmas, 1915, I read the testimony to his services that he showed me with such triumph, quite other thoughts crowded on my mind that mockery of Christmastide. Helen's pity had caused me to consider within the frame of a frost-bound earth the embattled millions of the war; and I asked Jeremiah, what of the ideals for which they fought.

"They are what they were evermore," he said. "They're the mask for the real business of the world; and if you mistake them for anything other you'll be a lone man in the heel of the hunt. Wait till the end. Wait till the end, William."

"Hypocrisy . . . you think it all hypocrisy?"

"That'd be bad temper, and worse taste. It's only folk that have been deceived lose their temper, William. Better not be deceived, but to think of the end of the hunt and be ready for it."

These had been Diarmuid's very words. He, too, had said "wait for the end of the war." He, too, had refused to waste his anger. His words had been: "What's the use of being angry with a trick that deceives nobody? When everybody goes mad, that's the time to keep cool and be ready for the end of the day with some work done."

Yet Diarmuid had said another thing, too; and therefore I now asked Jeremiah, in a sudden, freakish humour:

"And what would happen, do you think, if somebody started to put all these ideals into practice?"

"Happen?" he exclaimed. "There aren't such people in the first place. They'd be breaking the rules of the game in the second place. And they'd be shot out of hand in the third place. The game's too well in hand for that class of caper to be possible."

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I remembered his son's words, and I therefore asked him: "But would you take a hand to put them into practice? Would you?"

I can see still the astonished face that faced me. It was lit with laughter, crossed by incredulity, calculating the adventure I teased him with. "What's the good of talking?" he said, and he pointed to the paper I held in my hand. "Isn't what I'm doing better than all?"

Yet in that moment I saw the son in his face as I had so often seen the father's likeness in Diarmuid. The two were for ever crossing one another before my sight. Different they were; unspeakably different; but in their very differences they were more like than other men in their likeness.

6.

What Diarmuid had said to me he repeated more fully and perfectly some months later. On Good Friday night he came into my room very late. He was unusually diffident; and, whatever he wished to say, he approached it with difficulty. After some idle matter he pointed to my medallion.

"I often laughed at you over that," he said. "I didn't mean anything unkind."

"I know that, Diarmuid," I said. "I suppose I am a little inconsistent in your eyes."

"I don't know that you are. He kept a splendid memory alive for you by dying for it, and when that's done all those who share the memory are born young again. However old and corrupt they were, they're born young again, and the impossible becomes possible once more. You didn't know why you put the medallion there, so I'm telling you, you

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see. And by the same token I was wrong to laugh at you."

"What put these thoughts into your head?" I asked him.

"Easter," he replied. "These are Easter thoughts. Sounds like romantic nonsense, no doubt; but there's no romance in dying . . . the romance is with those who live. That's the true resurrection . . . not the resurrection of the one who died, but the resurrection of the many in whom the old memory becomes young again. That's what's always happening, and it's the hardest fact of all, because it undoes every other fact. And folk call it failure. Is it failure to work the miracle of life?"

He spoke musingly, and I looked at him in amazement. Then he broke off suddenly, and his manner became harder.

"That's you. But I've been thinking of father. There's something queer about father, I've always said. You never shut out things the way he does. Didn't it ever occur to you that he's holding something back? It did to me . . . often. Something back or something down, I don't know which. He never says what he really thinks. There's Emmet there on the wall always ready to save you, but I don't know about father. However, one has to be hard."

"What do you mean?" I asked him as he rose.

"What's the matter with your father?"

"How can I say? His dreams, I suppose. But there's another matter. I didn't mean the other day to mock the men fighting in France. I believe most of them mean the right thing; but they should have stayed at home and done it there. That's the only way, to keep Easter at home."

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7.

He shook hands as though taking a long leave of me, and was gone. I thought to follow him, but decided not to do so. Before many hours I understood what he had meant to convey.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

I.

THAT Easter Sunday Diarmuid was absent as usual skirmishing with the Volunteers, and his absence caused us no particular concern. We were sitting at supper that night when we heard him return and go upstairs. Supper was nearly finished when Helen said :

"I wonder what's keeping Diarmuid?"

"I'll go up and see," I said.

"There's no supper left for you," I informed him gaily, entering his room. "We have it all eaten."

"Very well. I want none."

Something in the voice checked my gaiety, and I went over to him. To my astonishment, his face was stricken with tears. Tears on a face of tragedy, averted from me in protest—this was not the Diarmuid I expected.

"Diarmuid," I said, "what's the matter? Anything I can do to help you?"

He turned to me without disguise. "I wish you please to leave me. I want no supper to-night. Tell the others I have a headache . . . anything . . . but keep them from me."

The following morning he had an early visitor, as a result of which he hastily re-appeared before us in uniform. He seemed his ordinary self, and I gave no further thought to his trouble of the night.

The rest of us went for a run on the motor through the hills. As we returned for luncheon, Jeremiah, who sat ahead with the driver, pointed to Dublin, spread out below us.

"There's a picture for an artist," he said.

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"Trouble pendeth over the City, would be its title. Did you see e'er a cloud like that?"

It was indeed a sinister spectacle. A massive weight of cloud hung over the city. From where we were we could see the singular light above it, raying down on each side of it. It was a light without radiancy, a light that illumined nothing, white and dull. But the most part of the city lay in darkness, hidden from our sight save where a spire rising in the air caught the leaden light and was outlined against the darkness. The centre of the city was in darkness, as if under a doom, and the framework of sinister light that fell in shafts about that massive gloom only served to make the darkness seem like a suspense in nature, unearthly, silent and sinister. We were awed by the sight, and watched in silence as we drove down the hill.

2.

After luncheon I went out to post a letter. Turning into the tram road I heard myself hailed, and saw Patrick Bronty and Aeneas O'Maille striding swiftly toward me. I waited for them, and Patrick Bronty greeted me with unusual heartiness, searching for my hand to shake it vigorously.

"We're up," he said. "Man, we're up. We're up at last."

"Is that so?" I said, looking at him with not too inquisitive a surprise.

"How do you suppose he knows to what you're alluding?" Aeneas O'Maille said to him playfully. They were like two boys together, these grave men, and seemed on very good terms both with themselves and with one another. "We were to have gone out yesterday, but . . . well, 'tis no use speaking of that. I hope I may never see men age more than I saw some of our men yesterday. It was tragic, faith.

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Young men haggard in three hours. However, that's past. The sun's sweetest after a storm. And I nearly missed it, except that he remembered me after the start, and came up to fetch me. I won't forget that for you, Phadraig."

"I suppose you'd think," Bronty went on, "he's any wiser after you. Costello, we're out at last. It's the day for which we've dreamed, some of us. The attack on the Castle didn't go too well"—he spoke half to O'Maille—"God knows there are few enough of us in it. But we hold the Post Office, the two Unions, Jacob's and Boland's Mill. Headquarters are at the Post Office, and we've a ring round the city. The Proclamation was read at the Post Office. So now you have it."

My brain was still bewildered, but a chill horror crept about my heart.

"I still don't understand you," I said.

"Well, you mayn't," said O'Maille, "but the substance is the dream thereof, my honourable fellow-citizen of the Republic. 'With hatred toward none, with honour for all, that there may arise a nation dedicated to the proposition that all men are created free.' Do you remember that, my worthy citizen . . . or have I it wrong? . . . it doesn't matter now anyway."

It was as much as I could do to keep pace with them as they sped down the road, much less keep pace with their minds. My mind refused to grapple with what they said. Yet through all its avenues a stream of consciousness flowed in; and as it flowed my heart chilled, till I had difficulty in keeping my body in motion.

"Do you mean. . . ." I began; and stopped.

"Just that," said Patrick Bronty. "We're out, and we're up; and the rest . . . is the rest, I suppose."

"The rest is with God," said Aeneas O'Maille. The Rathmines Road stretched before us now, and

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I remember its broad, bare aspect, though that may be only a treak of the memory.

"How many of you are there?" I asked feebly.

"Yesterday it would have been all Ireland," said Bronty; "to-day . . . well, a thousand would be too many."

"My God!" I cried. "It's madness."

"We go to share the madness," said O'Maille.

"Glad and happy as you see us. But I tell you, my fellow-citizen, that there is a madness conceived in greater sanity than all the little sanities of the wise."

"Mercy of God!" I wailed. "It'll go down in blood. And there's our Diarmuid."

"Be it so," he said. "Let it go down in blood. But there'll arise from that baptism a nation renewed in its perfect memory as sure as the sun that sets to-day will make another dawn. Have no doubt of that, for 'tis past all doubt. We didn't just hap on Easter. We know our symbols. Failure and success are now to take new meanings. And you needn't fear for Diarmuid O'Hara. He's a proud and uplifted man this moment, for it was for this moment he was born. He taught me, not I him, that to dare failure is to snatch the greater success, and that it's a little thing to hug the leeway of the shore."

I stood still. My body refused to move further. I could have cried aloud in anguish, and I hugged one of their arms. But they stood clear of me, for they were in haste.

"We must hurry on," said Patrick Bronty kindly. "We didn't always agree too well. But let us shake hands, for we may never meet again."

I shook hands with each of them, and stood helplessly watching them step bravely down that Rathmines Road. Then I turned weariedly for home whipped of all emotion.

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3.

I crept to my room, and sat with my face buried in my hands. My clear duty awaited me, but how dared I face it? How was I to go down and tell this terrible news to Jeremiah? And why should it have fallen on me? I saw dimly through my own acute pain what it would mean for him, what anguish beyond a father's anguish, what devastation to the whole meaning of a life. And I shrank from the task as a man might shrink from bringing a fair city to ruins. Why, why, why should this have come to me?

So I was bowed helplessly, less in my own pain than in fear of that task that awaited me. Numbed . . . I was numbed; yet not by the absence of realisation, but by the very excess of it. How dared I go down and see the sight that awaited the telling of my news?

I do not know how long I sat gripped by pain and by terror. It seemed to my apprehension that hours must have elapsed. For I sprang to my feet faced by a new terror. The day must be wearing late. The news must be travelling abroad. What if another brought the news to Jeremiah—another whose hand did not know so well how to diminish the shock to the mind destined to receive it?

I paced to and fro across the room in my anguish. I . . . it must be I who should deliver the news. There could not be, there dared not be, another. If ever man had a duty, that man was I. But what a duty! And why such a duty? I paced to and fro in anxiety.

At length I made my way guiltily down the stairs. At the door of the sitting-room I waited again. How I entered I do not know. I remember only standing before him, and hearing his voice.

“Hello, William, what's the matter? Not feeling

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well? You look . . . the dear knows what you look like."

"Jeremiah," I began, "... you'll have to . . . face . . . to bring yourself to face bad news. It's about Diarmuid."

"What about Diarmuid? What's the matter with Diarmuid O'Hara?" His eyes blazed angrily at me.

"The Volunteers have gone out and taken the city against the Government . . . against the army. . . . They hold it now. They're in the Post Office. They're . . ."

He half rose from his chair, and struck his fist violently in the air. His face flushed heavily. His eyes stared in his head.

"What damned nonsense is that?" he shouted at me.

"Ah, Jeremiah, Jeremiah!" I wailed. "Don't I know what it means to you? And they're not a thousand strong."

And then I saw Helen rise, that wonderful woman. Was she not a mother? Had she not a son? And yet that selfless woman rose and went quickly over to Jeremiah, and stood beside him with her hand on his shoulder, thinking only to ward the shock by her perfect comradeship.

He fell back heavily in his chair, the blood that had suffused his face ebbing away, leaving it patched and unnatural. He still stared at me, seeming not to perceive Helen as she stood beside him with her hand upon his shoulder.

"No: a thousand strong," he repeated. "Not a thousand strong. Taken the city. Against the Government. Against the army." He roused himself, and it was horrible to see him vainly trying to grip reality. "But why? What does it mean?"

"I don't know," I said. "Something about renewing a perfect memory, bringing success out of failure," I stumbled on, and stopped.

"A perfect memory. Success out of failure," he

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repeated, looking at me as if I strung senseless words together, which no doubt it was to him.

His hand fumbled on his knee. He looked as if he were going to have a stroke. He still stared at me, but there was no intelligence in his eyes. They stared only because they were not closed. They looked only at me because it was on me they had last been focussed. He was plainly oblivious to all in the room. And then I heard Helen's voice, calm and self-possessed.

"Would you mind going out, William, to see if you can get any further news? It may all come to nothing in the end."

4.

I met frightened and curious people as I went down the Rathmines Road. Some voices were lifted in loud indignation, expressing reprobation clearly intended to be heard at large. The street was well thronged, and I was an unknown figure, yet I felt as though these remarks were intended specially to be directed at me as one who had for his friend one of the Volunteers; and I looked steadily ahead and went on my way unobtrusively.

Then I heard rifle-shots, followed by a volley, and a rush of panic-stricken people streamed past me. Panic seized me, too, and I stood still. Physical sickness withheld me from running with the crowd. Then I recollected myself. I am no hero; and, never having heard shots fired in my life, the sound now, with all that it conveyed to me of horror, filled me with terror. Yet a charge was committed to me by Helen, and the thought—rather the sight—of Jeremiah returned to me; so with such poor determination as I could I held on my way cautiously.

The firing continued all the time. I heard, above the cries of the people, the whistle of the bullets

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through the air, and that sound chilled my blood more than any other. Dusk was falling, and I could see little, yet I gathered that an engagement was being fought across the canal for the command of the Portobello Bridge. I was informed that the Volunteers were on the defence on the other side, and by one that the military casualties were heavy, and, by another, that they were nothing, but that the Volunteers' casualties were terrible.

I stood in a small knot by the canal some distance from the scene, and could distinguish no engagement at all, save that I heard the firing, that came in single shots from the far side and in single shots and volleys from our side. A strange fascination held me to the place, though the firing shook every nerve in my body.

Some man near me spoke in foul abuse of the Volunteers. He spoke in deep concentrated bitterness, as though they had done him personal wrong. Another man of the group spoke in their defence. He spoke in critical detachment.

"They're our countrymen," he said, "and them fellows aren't. It's not known where they came from."

The first speaker was by dress and voice of the middle-classes. The last was a workman. Yet one did not think of these distinctions now.

"If you think that, why don't you join them? They could do with help."

"Me, is it? Herself'd have a bit to say about that. But I wouldn't have the shame to speak e'er a word again my own countrymen."

He turned away; and, as I felt he would have better information to give me than another, I joined him. He was walking towards Ranelagh, and I walked with him. But we had not walked more than a few yards when we stopped again. Night was falling over the city. Except for the rifle-fire that crackled to the left of us, or sounded in deeper reverberations from beyond the bridge, in spurts and splashes, all was

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silent in the distance. Yet somewhere there in the darkness we knew that greater matters were being decided. And we could not bring ourselves away.

We spoke with long intervals of silence, and spoke in dulled tones. He told me what he knew, and it added little to my information, except that there had been an engagement opposite the Post Office early in the afternoon, which he had seen. Though he added little to my information, he somehow conveyed to me a clearer impression of the ring about the city that the Volunteers were attempting to hold by possession of the chief strategic buildings. He was sure that the rising would not last the night, and was full of pity for "the brave poor lads," for, said he, "there'll be hell's blazes to pay for this when the Government gets a hold of them." They and their small nations," he added in quiet scorn. And somehow his words were comforting and comradely to me.

"I have a friend among them," I said, "somewhere there. A fine, true young man, with as beautiful a purpose as I'm sure there ever was. It was a bad stroke for his father, when he heard the news. The pity of it, and the sorrow of it."

"Do you tell me so?" he said. "And God knows Ireland had many a one the very same. I wonder will we ever be free. It's a poor set-out for us ever struggling for the one thing, and the fine fellows that wouldn't be daunted, ne'er a one of them."

We were silent again, and watched alternately the mysterious silence beyond us and the flashes from the rifle-fire to the left of us. Then he bade me good-night; and I, feeling conscience-stricken that I had delayed so long, hurried home also.

5.

Helen met me in the hall, her eyes quick with her unspoken enquiry. I told her what I had seen, and

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the little I knew; and then between us, too, there fell this strange, foreboding, unquiet silence. I broke it first by asking for news of Jeremiah.

Though she did not quiver, and no line of her outward calm was broken, yet her eyes filled with tears and her hand was thrown out toward me appealingly. "Why didn't you tell me when I asked you before? A wife surely should know. He has been talking of the most dreadful things. Not to me. He hasn't been aware of me. Oh, I know he has, of course, in the best of possible ways. I was just there, and he knew I was there; and as I couldn't ask more, I amn't complaining. But it wasn't to me he spoke, in the ordinary way of communication. He simply kept on repeating to himself the most dreadful things . . . the same kind of things he dreamed of, but in a different way."

"What kind of things?" I asked blindly.

She looked at me in surprise, and did not answer my question. "And the strange thing is, he doesn't seem to realize Jerry's danger. It isn't the present situation that's in his mind at all . . . or it doesn't appear to be. But something out of the past. Something out of those dreadful memories of his. That's what makes me fear"—and her voice broke with a sudden accent of distress—"that his mind's affected. I'm like a woman standing on the edge of something she doesn't understand."

"Where is he now?" I asked.

"I persuaded him to lie down. That was only a few moments ago." She stood alert, as though she heard something, then fled upstairs. Apparently she had caught some sound from him that I had not heard.

She rejoined me in the sitting-room, where the dinner was laid awaiting us as on ordinary days.

"He's coming downstairs," she said. "He asks not to be left alone. He seemed afraid to be left alone. I suppose we had better have dinner. I

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wonder where Martin is, and what keeps him so late."

Jeremiah afraid to be left alone ! Jeremiah so much as in any kind of fear ! My mind grappled dully with that while she busied herself ordering the dinner, this formality of a meal so long delayed, and so little needed.

He came into the room stiffly. His back seemed to have lost suppleness, and yet, stiff as his back was, he looked shorter and stockier. His eyes were dark and his face haggard. His eyes looked across at me, and then shifted quickly away, seldom resting long anywhere, and finally downcast, shutting out the visible world. They were the eyes of fear; no doubt at all about that. His hands shook even. Oh, this was not Jeremiah—not the brave, triumphant Jeremiah Hare I had known. He, that splendid fearless man, had by some evil wizardry been translated out of this body, and left it the lifeless hulk that now appeared before me. I could have cried aloud in dismay, but the old habit of control was strong upon him, and his great effort to appear natural so evident, that my dismay was stifled, for I dared not by even a gesture reveal that what he sought so retentively to mask was written only too terribly in every line and every movement of his body.

So we sat at a lifeless meal. We sat silently but it was not now the silence of foreboding. With graceful tact the maid moved a sequence of dishes before us and removed them from us; and if that idle formality meant nothing to us it appeared to mean something to Jeremiah, for I noticed that though he ate nothing he cut up and mixed together everything placed before him, so as to disguise that fact, like any cunning animal.

In the midst of this painted scene Martin entered. He was agog with all the news. He had been down to the office that day, and had apparently seen most that there had been to see, including the first engagement with cavalry in O'Connell Street, a long hidden

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contest around the City Hall and the trenches in Stephen's Green, finishing with the engagement at the Portobello Bridge, a part of which I had witnessed. Of all this he told us, and of his difficulty in getting out of the ring about the city. I could have thrown my plate in his face, if that would have silenced him, for every item of his news stuck like a separate barb in the hulk at the top of the table till it actually quivered and shook so before my sight that those hands ceased to hold knife and fork and rested on the white cloth each side of the plate. Yet by this unconscious cruelty consciousness was restored to that frame. Animation seemed to flow back from whatever place to which it had ebbed, and flowed back bringing pain, for I saw that the features twitched although the face was downcast.

Then the teller entered into an exordium of condemnation.

"I hope they get jolly well downed. That's what they deserve. Of course, it can't last the night. If they were only idiots and fools, they could be whipped and sent home. They are idiots and fools, of course, for who else would think of defying the whole English army with a lot of shotguns, just as if a few dreamers are going to upturn the world at this time of day? But they're criminals, too . . ."

"Stop." Jeremiah had the tablecloth gripped with both hands, and his eyes were bloodshot and his face was twitching as he leant forward to shout that single word. It came from him hoarsely and harshly as from one who could bear no more of torture.

Martin looked across at him in resentful anger; and then when he saw the face starting at him his expression changed to horror, and he looked quickly and fearfully around the table.

"I'm sorry, father," he began; "where . . ." and he stopped.

"You," said Jeremiah, ah, not in anger, but in stricken pain, the words being wrung from him—

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"You that wouldn't dare anything . . . you that hadn't anything to dare . . . you that's only fit to do what he'd bid . . . to talk . . . that . . . of him. You with the withered life . . . and he that's my own . . . my own starting again. You to talk? You . . . You to talk? You?"

Martin looked up at his mother, who was bent over her husband, her care all for him; then looked across at me.

"In the name of God, do you tell me Diarmuid's out with them?"

"Where else do you suppose he'd be?" I asked him angrily.

My question brought Jeremiah's regard upon me. He lifted himself on his arms and regarded me with a new, an utterly different sort of fear. For all his broken appearance he was like a baited giant.

"Why do you say that?" he asked slowly. "Why should he be there? Didn't I prove it was impossible? Didn't I prove it couldn't be? Didn't I, William?" His hands pulled at the cloth, and Helen pushed back the plates lest they should be dragged upon the floor.

"I know, dear old friend. But you see he never believed that, did he, and that's where all the trouble was."

"But it can't be," his voice wailed upward. "It can't be. You see, there are two different worlds. Don't I know, what with lice and cold and being hungry and . . . and . . . There are two different worlds. There's the world of what folk say, and there's the world of what folk do. They don't mix. Two different worlds that don't mix. Dreams and facts . . . and facts. Facts. There are two different worlds." He stood to his feet, and struck on the table till the plates shook, shouting as in a frenzy to have me believe him. "Two different worlds. Two different . . . Oh, but nobody believes me, and where did I learn it? Will you tell me that?"

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"I know, old friend, I know." Helen on one side and I on the other sought to restrain him, for the tumult of his brain was causing his limbs to work convulsively.

Between us we managed to get him upstairs, and undressed, and to bed. Then when he had quietened we returned downstairs to Martin, whose distress checked our upbraidings before they were delivered. That it should have been possible for him to think of this business without at once linking Diarmuid with it was to me incredible. It revealed to me how far apart these two brothers had been.

Then, as we sat discussing futilely the possible outcome of it all, the door opened, and Jeremiah entered, barefooted and in his night-suit as we had left him. He came and sat beside us at the fireside, shivering. We did not know what to do; whether at once to take him upstairs again, or to assume that nothing was out of the ordinary. The result was that we did nothing. He seemed ashamed of himself, timid, appealing for our help, which our awkward silence both gave and withheld from him.

"There's some firing going on," he said with shaking voice. And then after a pause: "Do you think Diarmuid O'Hara's in that?"

6.

Give Martin his due, he was our support that week. Nothing was too much trouble for him. If we slept little, he slept nothing at all. He was out all hours of the night and day, bringing us news, such news as there was to bring. He never thought of himself. One of us had to remain always with Jeremiah and, though Jeremiah manifested every sign of distaste at his presence, he took his duty unflinchingly, never complaining, always buckled for the occasion with impervious and undaunted willingness to serve.

If I had thought he had no affection for his brother, or that he was neglectful of his fate, I was quickly

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proved wrong. For nothing could have exceeded his concern, his anxious care. It was not at our bidding he set out the following day to discover his location. How he learned I do not know, and into what zone of danger he entered I did not ask, but he brought back the news that Diarmuid was in the Post Office, and that Patrick Bronty and Aeneas O'Maille were with him. It was from him we gathered, therefore, our little portion of comfort, that hostilities had not as yet centred around that central stronghold.

Quietly and orderly he lifted from us the outward responsibility of our life. He did not understand Diarmuid's presence at the Post Office. He did not understand the wreck he saw where his father once had been. He neither understood nor tried to understand the national, civic or household world now thrown into hotch-pot. And therefore he did what he could understand, and took up with simple energy the household direction that fell to him from Jeremiah's nerveless hand.

For that Helen and I were unspeakably thankful, since all our anxiety was with Jeremiah. It is strange that our thoughts did not run to Diarmuid. Perhaps the sight before the eye overpowered the thought of the distant soldier. It may be that this was so. Yet I believe that our anxiety for Diarmuid was received through and was centred in Jeremiah, as though we saw in him the instant effect of all we could not perceive in the battle-tost city. Whatever about Helen, I know it was so with me. For every cause away in the city was visibly recorded here in our household.

All that Tuesday through the warm sun-lit day the crackle of rifle-fire was heard by us, and Jeremiah shook to it like a leaf in the wind. Yet when we closed the windows, his straining to hear, and his fear of every sound, was so much worse that we opened them again as the lesser of ills. Later in the evening, when Martin brought us news of Diarmuid, he told us of the anger of the people against the Volunteers.

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Poor creatures, they were faced by hunger, which they understood only too well, and the ideals of right or wrong, for which these mistaken men fought, were things they did not understand at all. Yet when Martin told us of the vengeful cries he had heard, Jeremiah shrank in pain, as though it was he who was hunted by the populace, not Diarmuid. He said nothing then, but turned and looked at me; and in the fear in his eyes I saw more than all words could have told me, of the bitter experience of the same hunting printed in him indelibly. It had been covered by years of triumphant battling; but it was now bare to the sight—worse for the years of covering, like an opened wound that had rotted beneath a healing of the surface.

Martin saw nothing of this. I doubt if even Helen saw it, though her swift sympathy divined it. He told us of the troops that were being drawn in a cordon about the city. He spoke of the rumour that the troops had passed within the ring of defence and held the southern bridgeheads at Parliament Street. And again Jeremiah shook and shrank as though it were he who was being penned and driven to bay.

It was the same all the following day—these days that were like years, these hours that were as months. Jeremiah was speechless—not merely without words, but without the power of words. The crackle of rifle-fire mounted, and dulled, and rolled into a long continuous murmur, or died away, as the battle-line shifted and changed. Sleep? Sleep was a luxury as inconceivable as peace. We moved about restlessly, nervous reactions to all we heard and all we were told. Each crescendo of the battle, each rumour that flew, shook us to our roots or sent our leaves scattering. And if it were so with us, what might the case be imagined with Jeremiah? He sat in his chair, his eyes moving quickly in fear, a suffering shell of himself.

His eyes lit with hope when Martin told us of the

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rumours of risings all through the country; and they dulled with fear when that practical news-gatherer said that these were only rumours after all, and probably all untrue. Their suffering was an agony to witness when on the Thursday we heard of the ring being drawn about the Post Office, and learned that the confused murmur that reached us broke itself, nearer the city, into the menacing rattle of machine-guns.

Fear. This it was that incredibly embodied itself in that speechless figure—fear that came, as I could see, not only from the city of battle, but up through the long years of his life, making one almost believe that all that life had been a pinnacled city built above a lake of fear, into which it had now crumbled and fallen. It was impossible to leave him for a few minutes alone without hearing his voice calling, or without his heavy steps following. He was afraid to be alone. He who had never been afraid of any outward thing was now finally, in his son's adventure, afraid of himself.

It never occurred to me to think of fear in connection with Diarmuid. I imagined him in the Post Office, as I lay awake and thought of him, as cool, intrepid, convinced of the worth of his doing. No other picture consorted with what I knew of him. Fear was as incredible there as it was incredibly visible at home, as if the son had drawn up for his need all the common fund of courage and left the father pitifully destitute.

7.

Had this slow torture long continued, I believe there could have been only one end for Jeremiah. It continued long enough, for no words can describe the length of those few days and nights. But during that Thursday evening another sound came to our ears.

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We looked at one another in alarm, and Jeremiah sprang to his feet and cried out.

"What's that?" he said.

"My God," I cried, and ran to the window. (What could I have expected to see there? Yet so it was). "They're not using artillery?"

Further heavy shocks succeeded, and continued at irregular intervals, sometimes sounding close together. Martin hurried at once to get news, leaving us startled into a change of emotion.

For myself, and clearly also for Helen, the change was unbearable. For the first time that steadfast woman displayed a purely personal distress. Her son was now her son, and her tears flowed for him. Jeremiah was for the moment forgotten in her anxiety, and the instant wife had become the mother whose nature cried out for the safety of her son. Indeed, neither of us thought of Jeremiah. How could we while this terrible sound uttered its menace for the soldier in the city?

When we returned to Jeremiah it was to see a transformed man. A drowning man might thus have been whipped into the pain of life, crying aloud rather to be let die than to endure the renewal of his suffering. He was walking up and down the hearthrug, wringing his hands. His shoulders were bowed, and he walked with short steps heavily on his legs. He was speaking to himself, and it was not till I came nearer that I heard what he was saying.

"Why did he do it? Why did he do it? Wasn't it sure what would happen him?"

Let me record my surprise at his words, though it be to record my own curious mental state. For what I heard caused me to regard him for a moment helplessly, weakly endeavouring to recall a forgotten past. For two days he had sat dully receiving into himself all that had been happening to Diarmuid. I doubt if he had once, consciously or unconsciously, thought of Diarmuid as a separate being—with the result that

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we also had almost ceased to think of Diarmuid and his father as separate beings. Now he had swiftly become aware of Diarmuid's individual and distinct danger; he had become aware of Diarmuid's distinct and separate existence; and the coming of this knowledge had startled him into these rapid motions, and was saving him.

"Why did he do it?" he moaned. "Wasn't it sure what would happen him?"

I took his arm and tried to control him. "Let you sit now," I said. "What good'll it do him to distress yourself like this?"

He turned his haggard face on me. "Ah, but why did he reneague me? Why did he reneague me? Wasn't I the only safety for him?"

"He didn't want safety, I suppose, and that's all about it," I urged; but it was idle to think of consoling him.

Later Martin came back with blanched face, too deeply distressed to attempt any disguise of the tears that stained his cheeks. He bowed his head on the table while we awaited his news. It would have been cruelty had we broken in upon him.

"Poor old Diarmuid!" he said. "Poor old Diarmuid! I wish I hadn't behaved so badly to him."

"It is artillery, I suppose?" I enquired.

"There's no doubt about that, wherever they have it planted. But they're using incendiary shells."

"What?" That cry broke from all of us.

"It must be. I cycled out to the hills to see, and there's smoke pouring out from O'Connell Street way."

That night was the height of nightmare in a week of nightmare. Madness in the world without and madness in the world within. Helen had at last broken under the strain, and Martin kept with his mother, while I took Jeremiah into my room.

My window being in the return faced northward toward a sky that blazed with fire. Almost we could

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see the flames. The whole sky was illumined by them, and blazed fiercely or dulled as the flames rose and fell. The room was lit brightly when the flames rose and the shadows danced when they fell. Their fury increased as the night passed, till the great arch of the sky became molten metal that writhed and twisted as the smoke from that monstrous furnace coiled upward.

In this room the two of us lived that night, too fascinated by our own horror to leave it. I was too dead for emotion to quicken me. This last horror had struck life and feeling out of me. Not so Jeremiah. As the hours passed I sat dully aware of the madness without, and even more dully aware of the madness within. I looked unfeelingly at Jeremiah when he sat huddled in the chair opposite me. (We sat, if it will be believed of us, each side of that burning window as if at some household hearth). I looked unfeelingly at him when he stood facing that furnace, illumined by its unearthly fury, raging against it as against some human thing in a storm of frenzied speech. I was only vaguely aware of him when he tramped behind my chair moaning in his pain and crying out against God.

His words came to me over the high back of my chair, and I heard them weaving and repeating phrases together like a litany.

"He to reneague me, and didn't I tell him. He to reneague me—didn't I tell him the way 'twould be, as it was evermore? He to reneague me and what I searched out. Wasn't I knowing what'd happen him? My own Diarmuid O'Hara, the very same as I was. My own Diarmuid O'Hara, the heart out of my heart. Didn't I know and search it out? And he to reneague me. . . ."

And so he repeated hour after hour, while I heard him but had no power left to heed him or to help assuage his reiterated pain.

Then he would fall into his chair in a kind of stupor

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and time would flow by in a heavy tide of silence. Then he would spring to his feet and cry out against the molten heaven that illuminated him.

“Ay, burn and burn and burn the mouldy world. There was never any good in it. There was never but rottenness in it, and ’twas I that searched it out. Never any but I and a few wise men. Didn’t I laugh at it, and ’tis you to burn it down and down to hell. That it may burn for ever away out of it like a mouldy leaf. There was never any good in it, and ’twas I that searched it out, a gosser only fit for the leavings of its holy words. Don’t I know it? Didn’t I learn it with the lack of sleeping and eating? Burn it out. Burn it down to hell. I beat it; I turned it in and out; and now let you burn it and destroy it. Burn and destroy it for its beautiful words and its dirty heart. Burn and destroy it for a mouldy painted show.”

Then he would fall exhausted into his chair and moan to himself: “My poor Diarmuid O’Hara. Didn’t I tell you the way ’twould be? You weren’t the only Diarmuid O’Hara ever in it, my poor fellow. Another went before you, and there wasn’t anything left to know that he didn’t find. There wasn’t, there wasn’t; and it’s your turn now. My poor Diarmuid O’Hara, the heart out of my heart.”

So he continued throughout that terrible night, wearing out his life. And I looked dully at him, unheeding though hearing all, unfeeling and numb, till the slow light of the day turned that furnace into a pillar of smoke; and then I remembered no more.

8.

Martin awoke me when the sun was bright in the sky. Together we lifted Jeremiah, who was stretched on the floor, and laid him on my bed. Then we summoned Helen. That was the hardest task required of us, for we would so willingly have spared her this

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trouble. But we knew that she would have never forgiven us had we not summoned her.

Jeremiah's awakening to consciousness late that evening was a return to peace, ironic though it seem to say so. It was a return to Jeremiah Hare and our own day, though a dulled Jeremiah and a day terrible enough. For, under the doctor's attentive ministrations, and our careful ward, Jeremiah's mind all that day was the track of memories that tramped back, and tramped to and fro, in relentless conquest from the dens and caves to which they had been banished. Time and growth and space were all upturned. We sat there in the year 1916 watching a man who lay in some other year half a century before. We saw a grown man with command of great enterprises and great wealth. We saw, rather, the hulk of such a man, for in that hulk resided a boy haunted by hunger, and driven by a poverty the more desperate because of the bitter antagonism that grew in him against the world that had set him aside with its pious, pompous cruelty. Our open eyes saw a comfortable room in a comfortable house—in his own comfortable house. But his open eyes saw garrett stairs, leaden skies, high melancholy houses with shut doors, and (a sight to which he constantly returned) a house with steaming window-panes and red blinds outside which he stood begging alms. And he made the sights that he saw more real to us than the visible demonstration of our eyes.

We saw other things, too—things insubstantial yet vivid enough. We saw a mind shaping itself to cunning and growing conscious of its power to outwit. We heard that growing antagonism learning to clothe itself with seemly craft; and for myself, though I am not so unused to the world as not to know these of its habits, it was then I longed to be able to leap in and save the passing innocence. For that seemly craft chuckled to itself with a knowledge of power and began to dominate that lapsed mind, leaving few

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traces of the earlier intent it had learnt to overgrow and hide.

"A strange thing, memory," said the doctor to me. He sat at the foot of the bed, and had been watching his patient with absorbed attention. "It controls a good deal more of this world than ever we imagine. Now I suppose if you reminded him of all these careful particulars he has been giving us, he'd deny them all. I mean, his mind would shut itself against them."

"An accursed thing, memory," I burst out.

"I don't know," he said quietly. "Perhaps the curse is we don't remember enough. However, he is becoming more assured and confident of himself, and I wouldn't be surprised if he didn't come back to himself soon."

It was from such vexed scenes that Jeremiah returned to a world of outward turmoil and an inner world of incurious observation. We had removed him to his own room, for with the fall of evening the northern sky was lit again with the glare of fire. We knew that he had recovered his consciousness, for his eyes followed our movements about the room; but he did not speak, nor did he give any other sign of his awakening. And as we were under instruction not to speak with him, we were left with no other sign of his restoration than those restless roving eyes.

9.

The following day the news came of the surrender, and once again the unwearied Martin went out for news. I went up to bear the news to Helen, who sat nursing Jeremiah.

I had her drawn aside, and was telling her, when for the first time the voice spoke from the bed.

"What's the news?" The words were slowly

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spoken, and something in the speaking of them conveyed to me the sense of careful control.

"A general surrender, it's said." I went over to the bedside.

"Whose surrender?"

What a question! And yet the eyes were full of anxious enquiry.

"The Volunteers, of course. It was bound to end so." The lids closed over the eyes instantly, and great tears welled up under them and rolled down the cheeks. Helen wiped them away as I continued: "Martin has gone out for news of Diarmuid. It occurred to him that the paper would begin again at once, and that he would be able to get a pass in connection with it."

So we waited. Neither that day nor the next could we learn news of Diarmuid. We learnt of the evacuation of the burning Post Office, and of the battle of its garrison in the lane-ways thereabout, but of Diarmuid we could get no tidings. We heard that the Post Office garrison had, on surrender, been marched to the green in Parnell Square, and that it had slept there on Saturday night, under strong guard, some part being removed to English jails the following night, and a few being taken to Kilmainham. This last we heard on Monday as the result of special enquiries by the paper, but no enquiries could discover whether Diarmuid were alive, or, if alive, where he now was.

Resigned and heavy-hearted, we waited. On the Monday Martin and myself went to Dame Street to take up the antique threads of the business so tragically interrupted. We did not delay long. The sense of futility overcame even Martin, while for me to sit at a loom the master-weaver whereof lay speechless and stricken at home was a sham that laughed at me from the empty hollows of the office. The very room mocked me. The idle centre-desk laughed bitterly at me. The drab walls derided me. So might one of

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our Red Branch heroes, awakened from the dead, have revisited the old halls of high emprise. It was not only that the office was empty with an inconceivable emptiness. It was not only that the office was haunted by a memory. The very value of its symbol had been emptied.

Therefore I sent the staff home; and Martin and I walked down to see the ghastly ruins of O'Connell Street. I wept for my dear city that day; and mine were not the only tears in that multitude of sight-seers. This street had been the pride of our beloved Dublin. We had treated it with the familiarity of our affection for her; and now it had been devastated by stranger guns. The lumber of its ruins, scattered bricks and charred timber, were piled beside it and strewn across the highway. Martin was awed; but I, the tendrils of whose life had been twined about this accustomed place, I was heavy-hearted as we turned sadly home. What could it mean to those whose guns had wrought this havoc? To me it meant more than I could have dreamed in my tenderest moments for the Dublin of my life and the Dublin of my love.

10.

We were resigned as we waited for news, with a resignation that came as the result of the futility of our quest. But on Wednesday our resignation was changed to swift and piercing anxiety. For we learnt that three of the leaders of the rising had been shot at dawn.

Let us not be blamed if we thought then of our soldier. We were not unmindful of the general horror. We, too, were startled and sickened—dismayed first and then bitter—in the larger awakening. For my part, Diarmuid's words came back then to me like a buffet in the face—words of calculated prophecy.

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But we were only human if these things were for us a great framework in which was set our own immediate and poignant anxiety.

As day by day there came the tale of the morning's executions, the nation sickened with its horror and we in our household sickened in the expectation of hearing one name above all names dear to us. Jeremiah had now come down, and each afternoon, as I received the tidings from the editor, I bore them home; and we lived again—lived again in renewal of anxiety, yet lived again—when that one name was not mentioned.

Then one day that name came—the name he had chosen, bravely set out as he chose it: Diarmuid O'Hara. It was not death. To me it was worse than death. For death would have meant a sharper conclusion, where this meant a terrible continuance.

I left Martin weeping in the office. Helen read the news in my face.

"Well, what about him?" she asked. "Tell me."

My courage failed me. I had come to tell, but my poor courage failed me, and I stood shaking before her, turned culprit by the news I bore.

"Ah, tell me, William," she said again.

"Not death," I stammered. "Not that. Commuted from that to penal servitude for life."

Her fingers twitched about her dress, and her cheek grew deathly pale. "Penal servitude for life," she repeated.

But a choking sound came from Jeremiah, and I turned to him. He had risen in his chair, and his hands groped in the air.

"I . . . I . . . I . . . I . . ."

Whatever he had struggled to say, he did not get beyond that single word, and fell forward in a heap on the floor.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

I.

WHO shall speak of those months of upheaval? Our own house was searched by the military. True, Diarmuid had gone out from the house (though that they did not know), yet other houses were as ruthlessly upturned, carpets torn and furniture broken, where no such charge could be made. We grew accustomed to seeing bands of prisoners being marched through the streets and along the quays. The countryside had been scoured to provide them.

Fortunately, Jeremiah was not astir to see these things, or to observe the fear with which the very name of Ireland was spoken those weeks. I do not know what he would have said of the gambler's venture that had ended in this result. I do not believe he would have exulted in the triumph of all he had ever said. I do not believe he would have got consolation in the victory those months shewed for the philosophy that had been his life, the life that had been his philosophy. Some queer upheaval had happened in himself, some baring of a forgotten shelf. I would not wish to say what he would have said or done, but I am sure he would not have acted from any reasoned philosophy. For, though our world during these months seemed a complete vindication of all he had built in the adventure of his days, one felt that the building itself had curiously been dismantled.

Not from anything he said did this divination come. Poor man, he had little to say. While we went about in fear of the least word that would

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betray our love for our country, or such faith as the years had left us in the beauty of high ideals, he lay in his bed upstairs a shattered man. It would be hard to say indeed whether, these months, we feared most for his life or for his reason, so great had been the convulsion by which he had been torn asunder. We dared not question ourselves. All we could do was to nurse him tenderly.

Then one evening at the end of June a young man called and asked to see me. When I heard his mission I bore him to the garden, where Helen and I had been sitting.

"Here's someone," I said to her, "come with a message from Diarmuid. . . . Won't you sit down? You're very welcome."

"From Jerry?" said Helen, startled.

"That's so, ma'am." He was a lad of the poorer folk, with a brave, open, rugged face, and the high proud courtesy of his people. "The Captain and I were great friends. I was in his company. I was in the next cell to him in Kilmainham till the day they took him out."

"And how did you escape?" I asked.

"I didn't escape. They took me to Richmond Barracks with the others, and it's how they forgot about me, I suppose. They were keeping me back for a trial, I'm sure, for you'd wonder the number of times they put a mark against my name on a paper they had. They did always be bringing new parties from the country, and others would be going out to jails in England. But they left me standing. Then to-day they told me to go home . . . me and a few others that were in it."

"What was the cause of that?" I asked him.

"I don't know, faith. They gòt tired of trying them, I'm sure. One of their officers said they'd be sitting in court-martials till judgment, hearing the whole nation if it had its rights. And I'm sure he

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was right, too. So they bid me go home. They were tired of it, I'm sure."

"It's a very good thing for you anyway," I said heartily.

"Me, is it?" His head turned proudly toward me, his face mantled with a flush. "And everyone thinking I'd surely done something wrong that I didn't get punished with the rest?"

"Do you want to go to prison?" Helen asked.

He was silent a moment, embarrassed by the question. Then he leant toward her and said, severely, but with perfect courtesy: "Well, ma'am, wouldn't you want to go when all your comrades were there?"

Helen's eyes were full of tears as she looked at him. "Thank you," she said. "I believe I would."

"And you didn't see Diarmuid since then, of course," I said.

"I saw him the night he was tried, and the next day they took him out. We did be dodging the warders for an odd word, and many's the word we had through the window of a night. That, and signalling on the wall. He was a grand hand with the code, was the Captain. Ne'er a thing but he did it well." (It was pleasant to hear this praise of our prisoner). "He bid me tell you of Mr. Bronty."

"He died, I saw that."

"He did, then, and died like the man he was. Evacuating the Post Office, we were, and it burning itself out above us. We didn't stir out of it till the fire drove us, and then there wasn't anything left but to go. The military were firing down the street, and it was man and man across, very near, with nothing to help you to get over but your luck. 'Twas then we lost most. There were the women with us, too, and that made it worse; for you could hear the bullets coursing down Henry Street, and to think of the women going across that was fearsome. They

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didn't heed it. Worrying about the wounded, they were, for we had a share of them to bring over. 'Twas that delayed Mr. O'Maille. He was one of the last coming out, and he wasn't a step out of the door when he got a crack that put him down kicking. Over goes Mr. Bronty then. Devil a haste about him. Dandering over he went, like as if there wasn't a rising in it at all. He got to his comrade, too, unhurted, and had him lifted to bring across when the two of them went over. The Captain and some of us ran then to bring the two of them back. Mr. Bronty was dead, and Mr. O'Maille didn't live the night. God rest them for two brave men."

He blessed himself. "Amen," we said, and blessed ourselves.

I was bowed in silence, feeling a rectification laid upon me to be made.

"And Diarmuid asked you to tell me that?"

"He did. He bid me specially tell you."

"That was because Patrick Bronty and I didn't always agree too well, and Diarmuid knew it. I had poor patience with him, I believe. But, you see, he died as I couldn't have. It only shews, my lad, what a bad business it is to start judging."

He looked at me shrewdly and keenly. "The best of men don't be agreeing always," he said kindly. "Mr. Bronty was always where the fighting was hottest, up and down and in every place. Mr. O'Maille didn't fire a shot that I know. He kept with the wounded, and carried despatches. . . . But there was another thing the Captain bid me tell you. He thought he was for shooting, that night, and he bid me tell you, ma'am, that he was thinking of you that night; but as he wasn't for shooting there's no need for that. But he bid me to tell you, sir, if he only thought he was right before he was sure now. Tell him, says he, and he singing out through the window where I couldn't see him, that there'll be nobody afeared to talk of Ireland from this out.

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Tell him, says he, that there'll not be so many turned cowards by crocks of gold. . . . Those were his very words, cowards by crocks of gold. . . . Tell him, says he, that right's right, and true is true, and that success and failure's only the estimation of fools . . . That was a queer one. . . . The Captain was always talking that way with us. . . . Tell him, says he, that there'll more rise out of this failure than out of the success of vulgar empires. . . . That was another queer one. . . . Tell him, says he, that by blood and sacrifice Ireland'll come to her youth again, and be hard and true to her history and her destiny. Tell him, says he, that the young dream to do what the old hope to forget, and if the world wasn't said by the young 'twould only be fit for the burning . . . says he, when the young men dare to die rather than to take defeat, then the world'll come to its own again, and that the end would prove worth the price though the price was heavy. . . . And that is true for him. . . . He was fine that night. I could be listening all the night to him, though my hands and my ear were perished with the cold. 'Twas a bitter night. And we near got a shot from the guard on the head of it."

It was thus I got my message from Diarmuid. We cherished that young man that night, proud fine fellow that he was.

2.

In September Jeremiah left Dublin under the sternest orders from the doctor. The strange matter was that those stern orders were not required. Never once did I hear my friend make a single enquiry about the business—the conning tower of many enterprises—in Dame Street. In our quiet talks during his convalescence I expected often that he would make some reference to it. Yet it never came. It

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could not have passed so completely from his mind, I reflected, but over those deceptively tranquil waters I saw no sign pass either that the business existed or that it had ever existed.

He had aged—ah, terribly aged. His hair had turned grey. His face was thin, his cheeks were sunken, revealing an unexpected delicacy, almost a spirituality, of feature. But the element that baffled us all was his curious dignity. It was not as before a dignity of vitality, but a dignity of withdrawal; alert as before, but a different quality of alertness: alert rather to prevent than to capture. As I say, we were baffled by it. Themes that we once (any passing event of the day or of household reference) would have laid before him, we now nursed awkwardly in his presence. He was infinitely gracious, but he forbade familiarity. His dignity forbade it. His manner withdrew him from us. The result was that it was he, never we, who broached any subject for conversation. I cannot conceive any impetuous stranger departing from that rule. Such was his dignity. Such was the consummate guard he had thrown about his thoughts.

It is possible, therefore, that he thought of the business, but he gave no sign of it. And when the doctor ordered him away from the city he complied at once.

“We’ll go to Connemara,” he said. “Time we had a holiday.”

The suggestion was made at once. Apparently he had been thinking of Connemara. Once I would have rallied him on the choice, and all that that choice meant for him. Now I said nothing.

The arrangements had nearly been completed when he referred to the subject again.

“But you’re coming, William?”

The question should have denoted surprise, but instead it denoted a command; and I laughed.

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"I hadn't thought of it," I said. "Do you think so?"

"Sure. It wouldn't be complete without you." He turned to Helen for approval.

Indeed, I could easily be spared, for these months had brought great changes. Martin had risen wonderfully to his task. He was not his father, but not for nothing was he his father's son. An entirely humourless young man, he did not breathe into that intricate machinery the laughter of battle. He made it groan rather than laugh, though he made it groan to good effect. He did not cause leprechauns to bear "crops of gold" dancing into his treasury. The treasury was an entirely sober treasury; but it was an effective one. If he did not conceive vastly, negligent of petty gains, he watched the petty gains with a serious eye, till they swelled handsomely under his care. If he never buttered his bread on both sides, he never mistook the buttered side for the dry. He was no creator; but he took his compensation. For where the creator, knowing his work, is trustful of it sometimes to error, he was always mistrustful and left nothing to chance.

All this he could do as the inheritor of a house that another had built. He could never have built that house. He could never have conceived the miracle of it—the miracle of its conception, the miracle of its design, no less than the miracle of its erection. He might, had he been endowed with the length of five lives, have slowly and carefully built another as large; but there would have been no miracle about that other house, no wonder, no calling up of the tangible from the intangible. Each brick would have been most carefully brought, each stone most soberly hewn and rectangularly set.

It often occurred to me as a strange sport of life that this man should have been set between so contrary a pair as his father and his brother. Seeing him at his work I understood his father's old fond

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hope for the coming of Diarmuid into Dame Street. Yet he was their son and brother. He had, for instance, no mean gift of organisation. It was not his father's gift. Under his father's hand five men would produce the work of seven, and none would even perceive that this was so till the magic of his hand was withdrawn. Under the son's hand the five worked the full measure of their five, or good cause had to be found. And that had a distinctiveness of its own in a world where five more usually do the work of two.

Yet he rose greatly to his task. I had never expected it of him. He blundered often at first, but seldom blundered twice alike. Responsibility sat seriously on him, but not too heavily. I was always at his hand to help; but as the weeks passed, and his efficiency increased, it was plain to me that I had less and less a part to play in the new order. Let me instantly say that this was in no way Martin's fault. It was, I am sure, far from his wish. It was set in the destiny of things, for new methods required new men. At times I was so foolish as to be a little bitter, but that was ridiculous. I could always have asserted my control; and I am sure my control would have been recognised kindly and without resentment; but I was too old for such antics, and unaccustomed to their necessity.

Besides, was not my place with Jeremiah? Was not the business to me Jeremiah's business? Was not that room full of memories to me? Was I not being thrust out through the door, less by a new order of things, than by the ghost of a man who was not there . . . my friend, my comrade, stricken now and laid aside?

So when it was suggested that I should accompany them on their journey, I saw that the proposal was meet. We motored out from Dublin and did not hasten on the journey. Jeremiah had never really seen his country. Neither had I. We had

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been too engrossed to accompany Helen on her tours. Now it was a constant delight, and it was clear to me that he was living a new life behind that dignity that he so curiously held between us.

We never spoke of painful things. Perhaps we avoided them sometimes more painfully than we would have spoken of them; but such was the case. Only once they rose sharply before us. It was a surprise to me to see the Republican tricolour (green, white and orange) fluttering from the oddest places; from the topmost branches of high trees, from dismantled buildings. The sight caused me many thoughts. For here before my eyes was Diarmuid's prophecy coming true, the blood of the dead men of our week of nightmare rising to these tokens of hope and defiance. All through the country one saw them, and as I saw them Diarmuid's words came battering on my brain. Here was the miracle he foretold. For this was a new Ireland that flung defiance in the face of martial law. Easter, what had he said about Easter? "The resurrection of the many in whom an old memory becomes young again. It is not failure to work the miracle of life." Certainly that failure was having very remarkable results already, if one might judge from these fluttering tokens.

Then Jeremiah pointed them out to me. I had feared that he would; but now, as I thought of Diarmuid's words, I was glad, and I was ready as gently as I could to test this baffling withdrawal of his.

"What's that, will you tell me?" he asked.

"Oh, that," I replied, neglecting Helen's softest nudge of warning. "That's the Easter flag . . . the flag he fought under. Almost a miracle, isn't it?"

He made no answer. Straining round in the pretence to see what he had indicated I saw that his eyes were closed—not lightly closed, tightly closed.

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I had failed to cross his withdrawal. But I noticed that when we reached Galway City that evening he gathered the newspapers together and read them, a thing he had not done since his illness. And always, each day after, he read them carefully, and enquired for them when they were not easily obtainable.

The following morning, as we drove along the southern coastline of Connemara, we reached what I had rightly divined to have been the true goal of his journey. When we came to a certain village he bade the driver to drive slowly in order that we might be able to enjoy the scenery. Near the end of that village he bade the driver stand.

Did Helen divine what was happening, I wonder? I nursed a secret in my breast, the existence of which Jeremiah did not suspect. Did Helen guess? The car stood a long time, and we were all very silent.

For here, in this late visitation of Summer, lay the sea about this wonderful coast like a sapphire held in the light of the sun. The harvest had been gathered from the black, lonely ridges of the gardens by the sea. Not a cloud flecked the sky, not a ripple shook the sea. Already the men of the village were gathering upon the roofs of the cottages, busily thatching together. And the mountains, scarfed in their violet mist, loomed up against a sky so deeply blue as to seem thunderous.

Father Laverty's words, spoken in that distant room in Drumcondra, came back to me with the very quaver of his ancient speech. There, as I looked casually round, up on the heath, peeping out from a coverlet of scattered trees, stood the square-hewn house from which Marcus Blake had come this very road fifty years before. Here beneath us, set back from the road banked up from it, stood the cottage from which a watchfully observant boy had come with his grandfather. The same path ran down the bank. The midden was set beyond the

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door, no doubt where it had been set before, and the turf stack beside the gable-end.

I looked at Jeremiah (this great man, Jeremiah Hare, who had been humble Diarmuid O'Hara when he had last been here), and noted that his eyes were no longer observing the scenery. He had gathered I know not what thoughts about him, for his eyes were the eyes of a dreamer by day.

"What would you say," I said to Helen, "to a glass of new milk in this cottage? I'm thirsty, do you know."

"Devil a drink of new milk you'll get," Jeremiah said suddenly with unexpected vigour. "Black tea and potatoes are all the chuck you'll get here, I expect. But they'll not spare what they have, I doubt. No harm to go in anyway."

So we went in. A thin fire smoked from the hearth this sultry day, but it was not long till it was banked to provide a cup of tea and a flat loaf baked before us.

"Is there any weaving done in this place?" asked Jeremiah, looking at the empty stable at the far end of the cottage.

"Sorra one. We have to fetch our braidings five miles. There was a man in this house one time did a bit of weaving, but he went to America. 'Twas from himself I bought the house, and he going out of it."

As we were departing I saw Helen preparing to find her purse, but Jeremiah swept us before him.

"Have sense, woman," he said with unusual sharpness. "You wouldn't like that done to yourself. We'll send them something from the city of Galway when we get back to it."

He did so. Our host and hostess were, no doubt, surprised folk at the sack of flour and heifer Heaven bestowed mysteriously upon them. But the effect on Jeremiah was that he was a new man from that day.

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3.

The first and greatest sign of the change was that he was now ready, and even willing, to speak of Diarmuid. Hitherto he had avoided that subject; and we, too, had avoided it with him. Now it happened that further reference was unavoidable, and therefore the change came at a most opportune time.

For we returned to prepare for our first visit to Diarmuid in Dartmoor Jail, at the end of the required four months. Neither Helen nor I believed that Jeremiah would be strong enough, mentally or physically, to go. It is enough that we shrank at the thought of suggesting it to him; and yet we could not assume that he would not go. He met our difficulty. He shewed that, from behind his guard, he was closely in touch with us, by bringing forward the subject himself. He said little, but said it with finality.

"William will go with you next week to England," he said to Helen.

Her level glance rested on him. "There can only two of us go."

"Sure. That's what I say." He paused a moment. "Tell him . . . tell him that I'm thinking a great deal of him." The voice quavered, but the man held firm. "Tell him I've been thinking of a good many things. But don't tell him I wasn't so well."

Through the wire cage, with a warder standing between us, we gave our message. Hardly could we do so. How could we do so with this silent, uniformed figure in the passage between us, and he himself in his own wire cage beyond the passage? And we were too choked with emotion by the sight of that loved face and that form in the prison garb. We, grave old people, had fluttered with excitement at the prospect of this meeting; but now that it had come there was never so hopeless, so dismal a business. We knew

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not of what to speak. There could be no intimacy under these conditions, and without intimacy we were silent and tearful while time ran quickly by with our precious minutes.

Diarmuid's was an enforced gaiety, it was clear to see, and it did not help us that he was supported by a vain hope.

"It won't last long, mother. We're all agreed on that. Just a few years at the outside. I found myself getting fleshly and heavy with the lack of exercise, so I put in a stiff turn for myself morning and evening in the cell. I'm in better trim now. I've got to be fit against the time of our coming out, you see."

"I hope so, Jerry."

"Ah, never fear. The work that was done will bring us out. When that rises up in its strength it'll not be so easy to keep us in this place. You may be sure of that. But tell me, how is Ireland?"

I had begun to tell him of the great change that was already to be seen, when the uniformed stalwart told us that conversation on that subject was forbidden. And we were out on the bleak moor again before we had delivered a hundredth part of all the precious things we had determined to say.

I told Jeremiah of Diarmuid's hope, thinking to cheer him. And he looked at me long and steadily with something of his old intentness.

"If that happens, the world's a different place from what I know it," he said. "What's the use of deceiving ourselves with words? They were never dry land to a drowning man. If they give him peaceful dreams, 'tis as much as he can hope from them. Men who do what he did—he and his comrades—are not to be so easily loosed when once a good grip has been got of them. 'Tisn't in Nature."

"Why do you say Nature? It seems to me it's very much in Nature, for that horrible building was the most unnatural place I was ever in."

"Well, Nature had been well mastered so. It's not

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in the world anyway, or I have no knowledge of the world." He had winced at the mention of the prison, but his control of himself was not shaken. "Because a thing's pleasing to Nature, that's no cause why it's coming to pass. All the more reason why it'll not come to pass. It's not by pleasing Nature, do you know, that men come up from poor cottages and hungry harvests to safety and security for the future. Never a bit of it. And never you believe it."

He spoke grimly. I would have said also that he spoke sadly, except that, as I thought over our conversation, I wondered whether the sadness was in me or in him. For I was saddened, indescribably saddened. I had thought that the violent convulsion of his life, and the baring of his own youth, would have drawn Diarmuid and himself to a complete sympathy if not to a perfect understanding. Instead of which they seemed to me more unutterably apart than ever. I do not give all that he said that morning, for much of it was a confirmed conviction of the view of life he had expressed before. It was less agreeable now, for it was grimmer and without the old-time exultancy. And consequently the distance it placed between him and Diarmuid was less possible to be passed.

It was scattered, too, I noticed, with winged allusions, not to his life in Dublin, but to his roots in Connemara. As I worked it out in my mind, he had reflected long (behind the screen of dignity he had thrown up about him) on those roots, those yet more distant origins. Hardly could he have thought of them except in relation to the overthrowing of his philosophy that Diarmuid had undertaken. It is impossible to know what passed behind that screen, but human nature is human nature, and was it possible for him to forget what had nearly cost him his life, and what had certainly cost him his surety in the world? True, I now groped where I once knew him thoroughly; yet this is inconceivable. Therefore, I

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argued to myself, he, a shaken man, had thought out his life from those Connemara origins; he had walked its paths anew in the light of that terrible heaven of fire; and the dire irony had been that his feet had found the very track he had trodden before.

Was it any wonder that I was sad? Any wonder that I was dejected. There was a change surely; but the change was not for the better. Before, he had been exultant with the high humour of discovery. Now, he was grim and proud with the irony of re-discovery.

One of the signs of his new wayfaring was that he took to discussing the business with Martin. For some reason he did not come up with us to Dame Street. The reason was perhaps unknown to himself, as it was unknown to me. He could very well have come . . . as easily as have caused Martin to come to him with his books and papers. Moreover, he never discussed the business with me . . . only with Martin. Whatever it was that withheld him from Dame Street withheld him from discussion with me. He took over the general direction of his ventures again that Autumn more capably and more closely than I would have believed possible under the circumstances. But he avoided Dame Street. And, in that connection, he avoided me. . . .

4.

In spite of Jeremiah, Diarmuid's confident prophecy began to prove itself a right one. We did not at once see the process; but Diarmuid saw it. For we next visited him before Christmas in Lewes Jail, where all the Irish prisoners had been gathered together, themselves apart.

"What did I tell you, Mother?" he said gaily. "This is the first step out. Never a mistake about that. We weren't put here all together for love of

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us, but because of what's happening outside as the result of Easter. We know that now. The same thing that put us in jail will bring us out again. You cannot deny Easter. You cannot deny the resurrection of life . . . it'll burst anything."

He was not behind a cage now. We sat across a table, with the uniformed warder beside us. The changes were many, but they were more subtle than various. They extended even to our conversation. We had, of course, to be careful. Diarmuid's smiling eyes warned us and led us and guided us through the shallows of forbidden topics, till, less by statement than by allusion and suggestion, we had spoken freely through all that was supposed to be forbidden. Already in Dublin we had been warned that our loved personification for our land was an understood symbol. Therefore we were not surprised when Diarmuid asked us early concerning the health of Cathleen Houlihan. Even Helen took joy in assuring him as to Cathleen Houlihan's health and prospects of complete recovery. The solemn guard sat attentive. It was amazing to me that any man could have believed that three sane beings would have sacrificed so many precious minutes of a precious forty discussing the health of a lady even so well beloved. And my amazement was the more complete when that lady unsuspectingly assumed geographical proportions. But those alert eyes guided us, and the solemn guard said nothing. The result was a complete change in the nature of our visit.

He, too, was happier. His gaiety and confidence were not forced. The companionship, freely permitted at certain hours, of his comrades, had given him again his clear-sighted confidence. And when he was taken from us his last words were of greeting for Cathleen Houlihan.

"Tell her," he said, "I have a feeling in my bones that when she's truly well I'll be released. She was in need of the tonic Dr. P. prescribed for her. She

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was in danger of death, do you know; but now I'm sure there's a long and blessed life before her. Tell her that I and all her friends here are always thinking of her and praying for her."

Ah, for all his bright speech, his face was clouded as he went from us; and we were heavy-hearted as we turned from those gates through the streets of the town that dismal winter evening. Faith may be faith, hope hope, and love a rainbow in the sky, but a prison remains a prison all the time.

Yet I remembered his words. I did not repeat them to Jeremiah, but I nursed them the more tenderly because of that silence. Had I not true cause to nurse them? I remembered Martin's description of the crowd that had raged against the Volunteers. I remembered the harsh words I had had myself to hear. They seemed as spoken in another world. In truth, they were spoken in another world. The tongues that had wagged then would . . . well, they would not have confessed their shame; they would not have remembered it; for they wagged now to another tune. Even the grave men whom I met on the Chamber of Commerce spoke in a respect that was not less respect because it was measured and weighed and balanced with equal parts of disapprobation. Outside those guarded circles, I discovered that the men who had raised a city of flame above a sleeping, sullen nation, were now that nation's darlings. Had I not then cause to think on that young man's words?

I did not speak of them to Jeremiah, but not only because I knew how they would be received. Even to myself I could not justify the faith that came with the new year that within that year our household would once again be whole. Yet it was to me as sure as the faith of the morrow, though the coming of each morrow is a separate miracle to itself. I found myself calculating for that re-union, framing it in my thoughts, imagining tenderly for its future, for its long and hopeful future, in God's will, since

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Jeremiah was now going from strength to strength with each month. I did not fill in the parts we should all play in that future. Somehow the doings of that Easter Week made the parts hard to gather. Jeremiah still did not go to Dame Street. It was hard to believe that Diarmuid ever would, though I could not say why. I myself sat uneasily in my ancient seat. Yet, though I could not, and did not attempt to, complete the parts, I was never in doubt of the whole, nor that the whole would be assembled soon . . . very soon. I lived for it, indeed; and it began to live delightfully in me.

A nation, awakened by the miracle of new life, lifting its eyes among the nations of the earth, with its miracle-workers in a jail, 's a sight strange enough. To Jeremiah, behind the mystery of his silence, it was probably only fantastic, and, beyond that, no more to be heeded. But the strangeness began to pluck at the gates of the prison-house, and to make the ugly solidity of its high walls frown before the shadowy hands that reached towards them. To Jeremiah one could see the marks of it in the knit brows with which he read his daily Press. It was all impossible; but the fantastic world of which he read had grown confident of miracles. It expected to eat impossible fruit as surely as it expected daily bread. Youth had come, wilful and wild and imperious. That tide of youth was sweeping through the people; and, for the space of its coming, it ran about our elder way-worn feet, unsteadyng us, and causing us to lose our land-marks.

For example, one of these prisoners was put up for a parliamentary election. It was not pretended that he was chosen to serve any political office. It was passionately believed that by uplifting him as the nation's choice the prison-gates would be unloosed. "Put him in to get him out," was the people's cry. And when that election was given, then it was that the cry reached my friend, and arrested him, and bewildered

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him, and aroused him, for it brought back to him the abandoned thought of his Diarmuid O'Hara.

He had—ah, with such grimness, almost with such weariness—put Diarmuid out of his life, I believe. Perhaps it was the alternative for unbearable pain, for he always spoke of Diarmuid with the finality with which men refer to the dead. His life was no more a zest. It had become a fortitude. He was bucklered for that fortitude in the conviction that the order of the world was the order of the world, proved by him past question. That flaming symbol of Easter, 1916, had not really shaken him; it had only finally convinced him. The prison-house was the conviction, for in it Diarmuid O'Hara, and all that he meant now to his father, had for ever been put away. And now there surged up to him the mighty conviction that Diarmuid O'Hara had not finally been put away; that all he meant had not finally been removed; but that both were returning on the crest of a new tide.

The philosopher (for we must all make philosophies of our lives if we are to find them bearable)—the philosopher was shaken in him by the father's fondest hope. It was not simply that prisoners were coming out of jail. Diarmuid was, it was said, coming—his Diarmuid O'Hara was returning into his life.

"Do you," he said, "really think that Diarmuid O'Hara will get out, and . . . and return to us? Do you really believe all this?"

"It has a great look of it," I answered. "Hasn't it?"

"But . . ." he began, and said no more. I have said he was shaken. It was no idle picture. The very hands that held his paper shook. He looked as if he were going to be ill again.

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5.

When Diarmuid returned one sunlit morning in June Jeremiah would not go to the station to meet him. He was right. He could not have trusted himself for that meeting on a crowded station platform. Helen, Martin and myself went.

Half the city was there, surging about the streets. Before the train came in I saw one of our elder politicians, whom I knew slightly, sitting on the far side of the station, with his back to the crowd, like the symbol of a rejected world of compromise. None thought of him, or noticed him, this day of triumph, though he once had been esteemed and had suffered in his hour . . . had once himself returned from prison like those whom we now awaited.

Neither did I think of him, nor long remember him. I waited but for one face; and when that face appeared my heart stood still. Diarmuid was dressed in a suit that did not fit him, and hung loosely about him, making him look as though he had withered in his clothes. His hair was clipped close to his head, and his face was pale and thin. My eyes had held the memory of the man that had gone, and another man had come in his place. The falling away of expectation was for the moment very painful, but the gladness atoned for all.

Yet there was another change for which I could not so easily account. Nothing could have been warmer than the love with which he greeted his mother and myself; but it was when he shook hands with his brother I first noticed the change. He was harder, cooler, more deliberate than before. Some iron had entered into him. His face was stern as he shook hands with Martin, and looked him in the eyes.

It was so when he surveyed the surging crowd below. He was cold before that warmth of welcome. A number of brakes had been provided for the

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prisoners, and we had been informed that they were to be taken to a welcoming breakfast. Diarmuid had turned from those brakes, and was passing with his mother to our car when one of his comrades overtook him.

"Where the heck are you going, Diarmuid? Aren't all these cars waiting for us? You'll excuse me, ma'am, and I know it's not fair to you, but there's a kind of breakfast for us, I'm told."

"What does it matter? You can do without me."

"But look at that welcome, man."

Diarmuid looked at it. It surged in dense masses far as the eye could reach; it was tumultuous like the crashing of a storm; it flamed with unending Republican flags. "I see it," he said. "It wasn't with us yesterday, and it mightn't be with us to-morrow, and it's being there doesn't make us right, Sean, and if it were absent it wouldn't put us in the wrong. It's a decent-sized crowd, I'll allow."

Then that other equally ill-suited figure, with another cropped head to match, looked at him, at first with amazement, then with a slow whimsical smile. "That's maybe true," he said. "But we've got to hold together, haven't we?"

They looked at one another, these two prison comrades, and Diarmuid took his arm. "That's right. We've got to keep together."

Thus it was after midday before we got Diarmuid to ourselves, and bore him home. I wondered what Jeremiah would think of our long delay, and how he was bearing it all alone in the house. Diarmuid sat opposite me in the car beside his mother. He looked ill-nourished. His face was very pale and very thin, and his coarse loosely-fitting clothes and close-cropped head made him seem thinner yet. His appearance had created a great shock to me, and I wondered again what it would mean to Jeremiah as the car sped swiftly forward to the meeting of these two. I feared, unaccountably feared, for that meeting.

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As we entered the hall Jeremiah came to the door of the sitting-room. He seemed of immense stature as he stood outlined in that doorway. They stood, these two, in silence surveying one another. Then Jeremiah stretched out both his arms.

"Well, Diarmuid," he quavered.

"Well, father," said Diarmuid, putting out one hand to be shaken, coolly and calmly, without a sign of emotion.

Jeremiah withered. Ah, the dear, dear man, he withered visibly before one's eyes. He wilted as at a blow. We went into the sitting-room, and made idle talk for a time; but there was never idle talk so charged with pity beyond all speaking. Then Diarmuid went with his mother to see his room. And Jeremiah turned to me.

"He doesn't want me, William. He doesn't want me. He has turned from me. He has turned from me."

The voice with which he spoke will be with me till I die. What could I say? What dared I say? I fled upstairs to Diarmuid.

"Diarmuid," I said, "you were merciless to your father. Do you know he has been very ill?"

He was alone there, and faced me in calm perplexity. "Was I? I didn't mean to be. When a man has been in jail, I suppose, and has had time to think things out in a cell, it doesn't make him exactly soft. Every man in Ireland should have a time in jail. It's the finest . . ."

"Ah, what does that matter? Will you come down now at once and talk to your father? And for God's sake show a little warmth."

"I will, of course, though I don't know that I've got much to say. There's not much between us to talk about, is there? You can't very well alter a lifetime at order, can you? But I'll come if you like."

He entered with me. Jeremiah had heard his steps, and looked shrinkingly toward us as we came. But

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the manifest tragedy of his father's appearance, the wrecked aspect of him, only succeeded in throwing a still more awkward silence between them, more fateful than any speech. This Diarmuid broke at last.

"I was sorry to hear, father, that you had been ill. You're better now, I hope. What was the cause of it?"

"Nothing, Diarmuid," Jeremiah stammered. "Nothing. It was nothing at all. I'm better now."

Another long silence fell between them.

"I'm glad to hear that," Diarmuid attempted; but it was impossible to bridge the distance. It began even to be apparent that Diarmuid's presence was a burthen in the room; and, under the pressure of that, he went diffidently out again.

"He has turned from me," said that dear, great man, brokenly. "He has turned from me, William. He doesn't want me any longer." And his head fell forward between his shoulders.

6.

Jeremiah Hare was ill: very ill. He was, I believed, more ill than any doctor's diagnosis could have defined. Those diagnoses, therefore, were perplexed and evasive. The truth was, the illness that appeared in the body was but the register of a profound and (the conviction gathered in me) unredeemable malady of the soul. He lay in his bed, an inert mass, fully conscious, yet giving no heed to the world that passed about him. It was almost impossible to arouse him to interest in the least or gravest matter, though he conversed quite freely. Yet he perplexed me, too. Something somewhere refused definition. Ill he was; yet beneath the surrender of life that was the seat of his malady, beneath it and beyond it, he was like a man absent of mind because deep in thought. I sat by his bedside for hours, while

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he lay inert, in a silence in which the room was more full of the conjured presence of thought than if we had conversed actively together all the time.

I was about to say that this terrified me. I was wrong. I was not terrified; but I was troubled by a trouble alike to terror, because I could not frame it in my mind. That full silence about the inert figure was a most disquieting experience, and yet it was not restless. It was, however, fatal. That I surely felt; and therefore when Diarmuid informed us that he was going down to an election in Clare I persuaded him earnestly to stay.

Another of his comrades, and the captain of his prison company, who had fought with distinction in that week of Easter, had been put up for election; and again the contest was, not so much political rivalry, as a question of national approval of that flaming Easter symbol. Little wonder that he should go. Besides, he did not know the gravity of his father's illness; and I did not feel free to speak of it lest I should unnecessarily have alarmed the whole household. The result was that my pleading bungled so badly that he misunderstood my purpose altogether.

"If you think," he said, "that I'm in fear of becoming a politician, you may rest easy. You may, indeed. This election's not political, whatever others might have been, do you know. It's something much bigger and cleaner. It's a matter of honour."

I protested. "You have misunderstood me. And I wouldn't despise politics, if I were you, Diarmuid. Politics are but the machinery for getting our national and social ideals put into practice."

Diarmuid's round blue eyes (they seemed very round and very blue in that skeleton head) looked mockingly at me. "Poor Ireland, then. 'Twas a queer sort of machinery, if that was its purpose. Now if you had said politics were a carefully thought-out machinery for not getting our ideals put into prac-

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tice, in the hope we'd keep on tinkering away at the machinery and be distracted from the ideals, I'd understand you perfectly. For that's what happened, and accordingly that's all we have for judgment. Facts, William, as father says . . . or used to say." He turned away from me in cool disdain—disdain, not of me, but of judgment. "Some benighted person spoke of politics being the science of the second best. The science isn't so easy to discover; and if the hundredth-best happened 'twas as much as anyone ever saw. I'd call politics a gamble, where they aren't a traffic, for the umpteenth worst. And this election's not that anyway."

I could not persuade him; so he went. He explained his going to his father with simple directness, and Jeremiah made no comment. But when he had gone Jeremiah asked me to bring his lawyer, and we spent several days, the three of us, going carefully through all his affairs. It was a sad business for me to see him thus preparing for the end that I had now grown accustomed to awaiting; but it was a wonder to me to note the clarity and economy with which he conducted us through a complicated settlement.

It was not many weeks before we wired for Diarmuid to return. Jeremiah had not asked for that return; it shocked me to think that he hardly expected it; but when he heard Diarmuid's voice below he at once enquired for him.

Helen and I were present in the room when the two met. We were distressed and restless, but neither of these two appeared to be. As Diarmuid came toward the bedside Jeremiah took his hand out from beneath the coverlet and held it toward him, and the two shook hands, solemnly, like the engagement of a rite.

"Diarmuid O'Hara," Jeremiah said; and was silent for a long while. Then he spoke again. "You thought I didn't understand you; but I did. I understood you perfectly. I wanted to save you. But

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you didn't see that, for you didn't understand me."

"I think I did, father."

"You didn't, then. There were so many things you didn't know . . . that it wouldn't have been any good for you to know. I wanted to save you from them. But 'tis no use going into all that. You wanted to see your own world, and find your own road through it. Well, that was right, too. I wanted it myself. Many's the thing I had a great wish for, and with better cause than you'll ever know, because I went before you. But all I got was . . . well, no matter what I got, for it was my only wish to save you from the same. I was just the same as you . . . every bit the same as you . . . and that's why I never doubted you. I never doubted you loved me, do you know . . . maybe best of all when you were most contrary." The voice broke slightly. "I never doubted it, till you came back this last time."

"It wasn't that, father. It was something else." Diarmuid hesitated a moment, but not in diffidence. "I thought things out at night in jail, and . . . well, I didn't agree with you."

"I thought things out at night, too . . . once. . . . Would you kiss me, Diarmuid O'Hara?"

Diarmuid at once bent and kissed him. And Jeremiah put his arm about the lad's shoulder, and drew him closely to him. We were . . . well, we were very tearful, we two old people; but we were glad, too.

"I didn't mean that in the ordinary way," Jeremiah said then.

"I know that, father. But you see I had to be faithful to what I believed, when I was once sure. I had to go straight on, I mean. I wouldn't have been worth anything to anybody, else."

"I amn't going against that now, though I did hard enough one time, wishful only to save you many a bitter heartburn others had before you. I hope you may never have them, but I'm fearful. . . . Look,

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I've not left you anything in the business. You'd only go the same way as I did, if you went into the business, and maybe you were right and I was wrong. I knew all the time that was why you were afraid of the business. I knew that when you didn't know it yourself; and now you've your right to prove me wrong without being hindered or compromised at all. I'll be glad . . . you couldn't tell, you wouldn't believe, not knowing all I know, how glad I'll be . . . if you prove me wrong. But want's a bad teacher, Diarmuid O'Hara, and a hard master; so I've left you enough for you to be quite free . . . quite free. You'll take it from me, I know, because I wish you to prove me wrong. But if things should go hard with you, you'll see I've left things so that you can go into the business any time you've a wish for it. For it was for you I built the business, Diarmuid O'Hara, not for any other. And, do you know, it was a pretty bit of work, the same business, right or wrong. I hope you may never need it, but 'tis there for you if you ever do."

7.

It was a beautiful sunlit morning, the day we buried him in the Dublin that had been chosen for his suffering and the Dublin he had chosen for his triumph. As we sat in the forsaken house after the friends had all gone, with the scattered disarray of luncheon lying still on the table, we heard newsboys crying loudly in the street without. While Diarmuid hurried out to buy a paper, my thoughts went, not forward to the news he expected, but backward to the day of another newsboy crying through the streets of this city. For Diarmuid was young, and looked forward; but I was not young, and looked backward.

He returned with the paper in his hand, and announced the figures of the election that had been won.

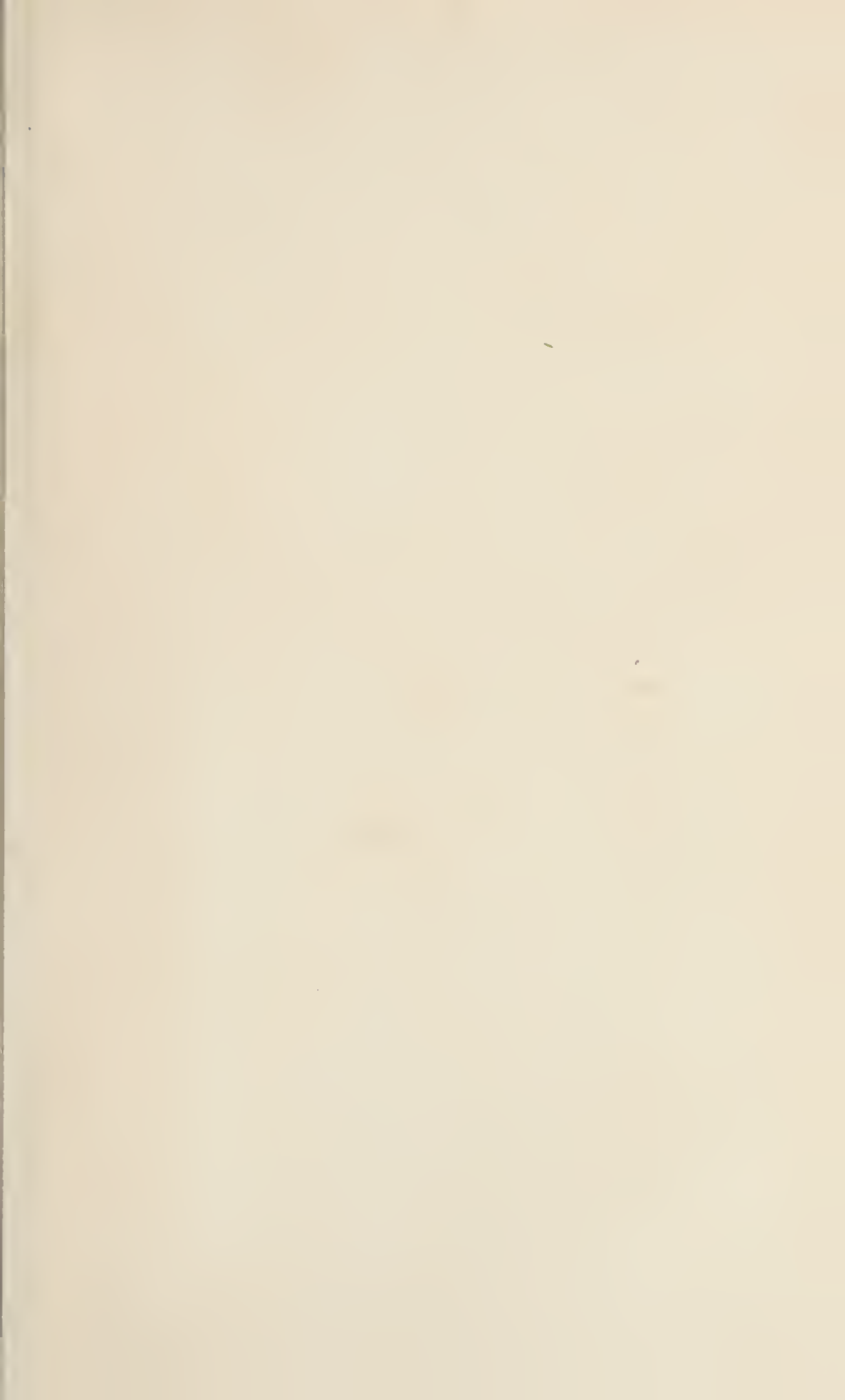
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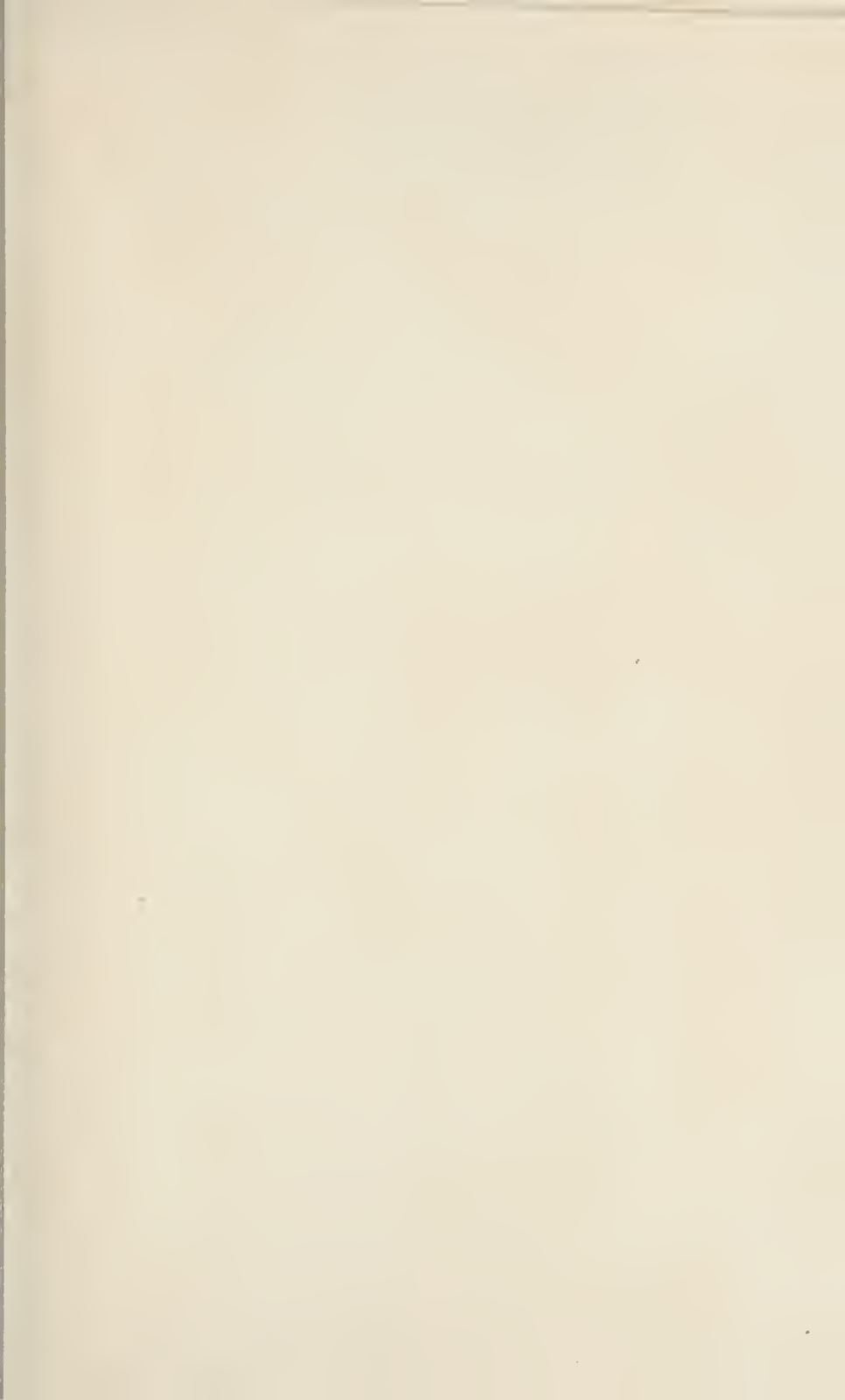
He was elated and flushed with joy. "It's the morning of a new day," he said in triumph.

"It's your right to think so," I said. "And I'm glad and happy with you. I am, indeed. But, do you know, I remember many a thing. I remember the great Chief. Don't let me check you. You won't anyway, so there's no harm in my saying, Diarmuid, dear man, that every morning has its noon, and every noon is followed by its night."

8.

So I said to him; for, unless I mistake not, the meaning of Life is the teaching of disillusionment. But . . . ah, Youth, Youth! How cruel a thing it is, how proud, how exultant! Eách age must be sufficient to itself. I am now myself an old man, and my days will soon be numbered like those of my old friend, the companion of my life. It is not meet that I should encumber the road with the little stored wisdom of my experience. For what is the experience of one, or what is the experience of a generation? Life is more wise than we, and must for ever be renewing itself from the eternal fountains of its Youth.





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